# Manual of English Literature

THE AGE OF EXPANSION

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX.

J. MACMILLAN BROWN, M.A.

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# MANUAL OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

ERA OF EXPANSION, 1750—1850.

*ITS CHARACTERISTICS AND INFLUENCES, AND THE POETRY OF ITS PERIOD OF PREPARATION, 1750—1800.*

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX.

BY

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# PREFACE.

THE addition of Anglo-Saxon and Early English to the work in English for the Pass Degree by the Senate of the University of New Zealand at its 1893 session has necessitated the writing of this manual. Each of the periods of literature set for 1894 and 1895, viz. from 1750 to 1800 and from 1800 to 1850, is so full of authors and books and so worthy of detailed study, and yet has so little upon it in any of the available textbooks, that it needs two hours' lecture a week during the session. One of these hours has now, I found, to be devoted to the teaching of Old English. And I have had to spend my long vacation in attempting a manual that would supply the deficiency. After I had written the general chapters on the characteristics and influences of the two periods, I saw that the vacation would be too short for the detailed study of the literature of both. I have now found it to be too short for the completion of even the first period; and the approach of the beginning of the session has compelled me to print only the general chapters and the chapter on its poetry. The other chapters will be delivered as lectures during the session.

Yet what is printed forms a natural unity. It sketches in the first three chapters the features of the great era of the rise of modern literature, and then, taking poetry, the form that has hitherto been the most essentially literary and the most sensitive to coming change, describes its development, and illustrates in detail the application of the general conclusions of the earlier chapters. Nor would a correct view of the evolution of the poetry of the period of preparation (1750 to 1800) have been gained, unless by throwing it into perspective, by seeing its relation to the period of fulfilment (1800 to 1850), for which it was a preparation. Hence not merely is the era of expansion (1750 to 1850) described as a whole, but each of the two stages or periods is described separately.

The biographical tables in the appendix have been prepared by Mr. James Hight, B.A. They include the life and works of all the authors who wrote poetry during the period (1750 to 1800).

J. MACMILLAN BROWN.

March 19th, 1894.

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## CHAPTER I.

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND INFLUENCES OF THE ERA OF EXPANSION.

### 1750-1850.

**Section 1.**—(1) There are no exact limits for any era. (2) Artificial limits are needed for the sake of convenience. (3) Those of the modern era of English literature are less definite than of any other. (4) It was the era of expansion. (5) It was preceded by a period of as great contraction. (6) The absence of literary taste in the Georges weakened the power of patronage over English literature. (7) Otherwise a national literature could not have reappeared. (8) Yet the centralistic spirit lingered on in various forms throughout the era. ... ... ... ... ... 1—3

**Section 2.**—(1) The audience expanded by the inclusion of the new middle classes; (2) which at the same time purified and narrowed the scope of the literary art, (3) nationalised the literature, (4) abridged the freedom of authors in depicting the passion of love, (5) and generated sentimentalism. (6) The process was aided by the inclusion of women amongst authors and readers, (7) which explains the predominance of the novel. ... ... ... 3—6

**Section 3.**—(1) New literary centres came into prominence outside of London—especially in Scotland, (2) also in Ireland, (3) in provincial England, (4) and in America. (5) The Continent drew English literary men to it. (6) But there was a movement towards recentralisation after the middle of this century. ... ... ... ... 6—8

**Section 4.**—(1) The decentralisation resulted in the expansion of topics, (2) and especially in the annexation of middle class life, lowly life, (3) and provincial life. (4) The insularity of English literature disappeared; (5) and foreign countries were ransacked by fiction for its themes, (6) and past ages too. (7) The inclusion of the new leisured classes in the audience of literature made the modern novel a necessity, (8) as the portal into other spheres of literature. 8—12

**Section 5.**—(1) The expansion also made it a great poetic era. (2) But it was the expansion of the thought that most affected poetry. (3) English poetry was reborn with the lavish material of the Elizabethan era and the finish of the Queen Anne period; (4) and gained passion from revolutionism, (5) that did not find vent; (6) and it became seer-like especially in its later phases. (7) The renaissance of English poetry is to be accounted for more by the urbanising of the population than by reaction. (8) All poetry, even the reactionary, was touched by the new philanthropy; (9) it did not feel any recoil from the Revolution. ... 12—17

**Section 6.**—(1) All passions and thoughts, all history and science and philosophy were revivified by the new point of view. (2) A new kinship with nature was discovered; (3) and a new interest in the future awakened; (4) whilst the feeling of a new relationship to God made the period almost an age of faith. (5) The new religious enthusiasm was due rather to the resurgence of the puritan middle classes than to reaction; (6) was felt in all spheres; (7) and transfigured poetry. ... ... ... ... 17—21

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**Section 8.**—(1) The scholarship of old English literature and especially Elizabethan literature began to predominate. (2) The publication of Percy's Reliques, as well as the new study of the Elizabethan drama, was an evidence of the reintroduction of the people into the realm of cultured literature. (3) The popularity of Ossian was a sign of the new birth of national instinct in literature. (4) The great antiquarian movement in literature pointed in the same direction. (5) English scholarship and English national life came together for the first time. (6) The nationalism of the audience attracted the genius and talent of the nation into literature. (7) But the French Revolution divided the era into a period of preparation and a period of fulfilment. 24—30

## CHAPTER II.

### SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND INFLUENCES. THE PERIOD OF PREPARATION.

### 1750-1800.

**Section 1.**—(1) Reaction is to some extent implied in development in that there is criticism and, as a consequence, antiquation of the old. (2) Pope's influence lingered on,

(3) and appeared even in the poetry that completely belonged to the new time. (4) The prose was still much affected by the Queen Anne style. ... ... ... 31—33

**Section 2.**—(1) The Revolution rendered the struggle with the old spirit easier; (2) yet, not finding free vent in politics and public life, (3) it generated philanthropy in the active-minded and sentimentalism in the indolently leisured, (4) and only in the last decade of the century did its violent forms find expression in literature. ... ... 33—36

**Section 3.**—(1) Sentimentality and romance were two of its best literary safety-valves in England. (2) Romantic interest in the past revived the study of history, without changing its method; (3) although its philosophical treatment now appeared and originated political economy, (4) and the discussion of questions as to origins. (5) The same growth of cosmopolitanism was shown by the increase of books of travel. (6) The East especially excited the imagination. (7) But only towards the close of the period is the influence on literature fully apparent. ... ... 36—39

**Section 4.**—(1) So the expansion of science only superficially affected the poetry of the period; (2) yet natural history had advanced so far as to introduce into literature a new feeling for nature; (3) and the practical sciences became literary material long before the speculative. (4) Optimism and materialism existed side by side; (5) and utilitarianism came into being as a working philosophical principle. (6) Science also made observation, thought, and the use of language more exact. (7) Yet its full effect was not yet attained. ... ... ... ... ... ... 40—44

**Section 5.**—(1) It is the same with the influence of art. (2) The stage could never become national again, but, through comedy especially, moulded the modern novel. (3) Music after the Elizabethan era had not great influence over poetry or prose till the nineteenth century. (4) Architecture and sculpture began to attract imaginative writers and to mould their ideas. (5) But it was painting that most developed during the period and most influenced literature. (6) It came to be allied with literature in the illustration of books. (7) The result was greater picturesqueness in both poetry and prose. ... ... ... ... 44—51

**Section 6.**—(1) Literature was deeply affected by oratory, which now reached its climax in England. (2) The Johnsonian balanced period was produced by it, (3) and affected all forms of prose and many of poetry. (4) The new political oratory was more dignified than either pulpit or forensic oratory. (5) It helped prose to a more natural and regular style, a result finally accomplished by the new fiction and the new poetry. ... ... ... 51—54

**Section 7.**—(1) The great individualities of the Commons of this period were bound to make oratory predominate ; (2) for it was a period of great individualities throughout Europe; but these were all absorbed by public life. (3) In England the consciousness of the world-wide questions and issues inspired the oratory. ... ... ... 54—56

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## CHAPTER III.

### SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND INFLUENCES. THE PERIOD OF FULFILMENT.

### 1800-1850.

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**Section 7.**—(1) The spread of musical taste made lyricism again dominant in poetry, and melody and harmony in prose. (2) Sculpture, architecture, and painting had also their moulding influence on the literature of the period. (3) But the stage was the art that most influenced the literature, even though it was not and would never again become the national institution it had been in the Elizabethan age. (4) The acting drama affected the fiction, and the literary drama affected the poetry and the imaginative prose. (5) Verbatim reporting raised oratory into a more accurate and thoughtful art. (6) And oratory through journalism and the pulpit affected the style of most writers. ... ... ... ... ... 90—95

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**Section 9.**—(1) The kinship of man with the infinities first became a source of poetic inspiration. (2) World-anguish, arising from the dethronement of the ego, combined with revolutionism, and became in some pessimistic, in others optimistic. (3) Philosophy had to be revised from the new point of view, and, as in all ages of progressive science, its positivist revision was the dominant. (4) But the positivist attitude in imaginative literature is barren. (5) Science by resolving all matter into energy and making it immortal has gradually confirmed the idealistic attitude in literature; (6) and throughout the poetry and imaginative prose of the period this predominates. (7) But science and the positive attitude led to a religious reaction in the second quarter of the century; the Broad-church movement influenced literature more widely and deeply than the High-church movement. ... ... ... ... 97—102

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**Section 11.**—(1) The novel has gradually mastered the whole of this mediating realm. (2) It absorbed the functions and purposes of poetry and the drama. (3) And this was the period of great movements rather than of great individualities, and made more demand upon the most popular form of literature. (4) Yet the novel still comes after poetry and the drama as a literary form and as a sensitive test of popular feeling. ... ... 104—107

## CHAPTER IV.

### ENGLISH POETRY OF THE PERIOD OF PREPARATION.

### 1750-1800.

**Section 1.**—(1) It needs a great poet in a period to make it abandon precedent. (2) The poetry of this period is at best one of tendencies. (3) The most prominent tendency in the first half of it is to follow Pope. (4) Johnson, in spite of his strong character, was mastered by it. (5) In his poetry he adds a certain clumsy dignity of his own to the Popian couplet. (6) Whilst conservative in form and in political and religious spirit, he anticipates the revolutionism of the new class in social opinions. 108—112

**Section 2.**—(1) Goldsmith is his true successor in poetry, but carries the spirit of social revolt farther. (2) He is nearer the coming age than Johnson, and more like to Rousseau in his sentiments. (3) His Traveller chiefly expresses the middle class love of hearth and home, and the rising middle class philanthropy, and, whilst deploring the evils of wealth and luxury, inconsistently closes with a Johnsonian peroration on the safety of absolutism. (4) It therefore became an English household book. (5) The Deserted Village though less of a unity became more popular, because it gave fullest expression to the rising love of nature and romance. (6) It inaugurated the poetry of regret which lingered round abandoned hamlets or cottages. (7) The Wealth of Nations, published soon after, elaborately refuted the economic fallacy it expresses, but could not have so immediate an effect as this poem so full of beautiful melody and pictures of reminiscence. (8) The poem touched the hearts of the newly urbanised masses, although a moment's thought would have convinced them of the inaccuracy of the assertion that "men decay". (9) He defended the fallacy in his prose dedication, and seemed quite unconscious that he was giving expression to the rising revolutionism of Europe. (10) He is also with the literary revolution, that was about to reject patronage, to cast off the fetters of pedantry, and to abandon the personal invective of satire. (11) His occasional verses are best when they are humorous, and reveal in him a vein not unlike Hood's. ... ... ... ... 112—123

**Section 3.**—(1) Crabbe is his successor, but, by his realistic method and closer study of Pope, even in his first poem Inebriety, misses the romantic tinge of Goldsmith, and merits the name "Pope in worsted stockings." (2) Conservative though he was, and free from the sentimental fallacy, his poetry belongs to the revolutionism of the new time. (3) "Inebriety" paints with

Dutch faithfulness the drinking customs of the time, and, with more epigram than he ever afterwards used, satirises the upper classes, and especially the clergy, for their indulgence. (4) The second The Candidate, is enslaved to Pope. (5) His next, The Library, is as conventional and dull as the worst of the didactic poems in vogue during the eighteenth century. (6) The Village returned to the manner of Goldsmith, and to realism, and gave self-confidence to the naturalness of "Burns"; (7) in the first book, it is a running pessimistic comment on Goldsmith's romantic picture, but in its second it lapses into the Queen Anne style. (8) His next, The Newspaper, though Queen Anne in form, gives a picture of a new phenomenon of the time that has not been antiquated by a century of much-lauded journalistic progress. (9) The Revolution made him feel belated and remain silent for more than twenty years. (10) The Parish Register, produced in 1807, is more realistic, more careless of all the niceties of art, and more prosaic than any of his eighteenth century poems. (11) The new passion for story gradually mastered him. (12) The Borough is more intense in art and more psychological than The Village, and yet it is true eighteenth century; (13) it consists of a long series of letters giving descriptions of various characters, scenes, and institutions; (14) at the close he reveals that the secrets of his art are sympathy with his themes, and first-hand observation. (15) The Tales have little of the new time in them, and still show him to be the representative of the middle class churchman of the eighteenth century. 123—138

**Section 4.**—Campbell and Bloomfield belong to the nineteenth century, Rogers as much to the eighteenth as to the nineteenth; he is imitative, first of Gray, then of Goldsmith, and lastly of Pope, but in his nineteenth century poems follows the narrative and descriptive styles of the time; he was a revolutionist, yet shows no revolutionism; he had a satiric genius, yet never wrote satire. ... ... ... ... ... ... 139—140

**Section 5.**—He is really a disciple of the school of blank verse didactic poets, who appeared in the second quarter of the century with the resurgence of the middle class and their long acquaintance with metaphysical theology and Paradise Lost. ... ... ... ... 141—142

**Section 6.**—Akenside is the most important poet of the school; his Pleasures of the Imagination (1744) is a cross between Paradise Lost and The Essay on Man; it was written at Edinburgh University and represents the influx of Gallicism into the northern capital. ... 142—144

**Section 7.**—(1) The Night Thoughts of Edward Young was a poem published about the same time and addressed to the same type of audience in Miltonic blank verse; but it is perpetually marred by insincerities and bathos. (2) Blair's Grave has the same faults; but has true poetry in it. ... .. ... ... ... ... 144—146

**Section 8.**—(1) John Dyer was as real a poet and followed the Puritan secular poets in his Grongar Hill, whilst he used Miltonic blank verse in his Ruins of Rome. (2) But it was his Fleece (1757) that best showed how much the new audience was to be found in the middle and industrial classes. (3) Glover reveals in his blank verse poems the middle class interest in commerce and passion for political freedom. (4) Armstrong's blank verse poems come closer in spirit to the Queen Anne age, and yet show promise of the coming poetry. (5) Grainger's Sugar Cane shows the drift of the new audience towards industrialism. (6) Didacticism and blank verse changed as the century advanced; the one became more concrete, the other more like prose. (7) The history of the heroic couplet is, on the contrary, one of decay; its true period is the eighteenth century. (8) Its original and proper use was either satiric or didactic; but later on in the century it was used for all purposes; and in the last quarter there was a distinct renaissance of it. ... 146—152

**Section 9.**—Its use for descriptive purposes is best illustrated by Falconer's Shipwreck, one of the first indications of an imaginative interest in the nautical pursuits of the English nation; it is marked by the pedantic pseudo-classicism of the Queen Anne period and the pedantic technicalism of the new industrial era, by the stiff rhetoric of the past age and the passion for nature of the coming age. ... ... ... ... ... 152—154

**Section 10.**—(1) Darwin's Botanic Garden shows a similar medley of the new and the old, and illustrates the didactic use of the heroic couplet for scientific purposes. (2) The poem, especially in its third part The Economy of Vegetation, is deeply tinged with revolutionism. (3) The Anti-Jacobin set itself to ridicule the revolutionists, and laughed at Darwin's Loves of the Plants in The Loves of the Triangles. (4) He was the centre of the Lichfield coterie, and had introduced into it advanced Gallicism from Edinburgh University; he was materialistic in his philosophy, and advocated a theory of evolution by transformations. ... ... ... 154—159

**Section 11.**—Satire was the true function of the heroic couplet; but there was no great satirist in our period, because the greater spirits were too earnest for it, and

the lesser found new vent in journalism. (2) Churchill was the chief satirist and wrote in the decade best suited to satire (1760-1770); in politics he took the side of Wilkes and reform against the king and Bute, and attacked most of the eminent men of the time including Garrick, Smollett, and Falconer, who replied. (3) He quarrelled with Hogarth and Dr. Johnson, and in all his satires was perhaps more personal than witty; yet the news of his death killed his sister and her betrothed Lloyd, and Cowper remained loyal to his memory. ... 159—165

**Section 12.**—(1) Chatterton in his satires caught his tone, political, social, moral, and literary, and attacked without any principle or personal reason many of the victims of Churchill's. (2) He even followed him in his Voltairian tone, and sneered at religion and morality. (3) He used the heroic couplet for didactic purposes only in two or three poems; and by far his best satirical production was his ironical will. ... ... ... ... ... 165—171

**Section 13.**—(1) The mantle of Churchill fell upon John Wolcot, who, however, preferred the ode to the heroic couplet; another form of satire of the time was represented by The New Bath Guide of Christopher Anstey. (2) A serious rival to Wolcot for a time was The Rolliad, a series of political satires from the side of the Opposition. ... ... ... ... ... 171—172

**Section 14.**—(1) On the model of this Canning, Gifford, Frere, and others started a satirical journal called The Anti-Jacobin in 1797 to counteract revolutionary principles. (2) It ran for less than a year, but was followed by various dull imitations up till 1833. (3) It satirises new experiments in verse with the same vigour as it attacks the new humanitarianism and the new republicanism; it is indiscriminate too in its ridicule of writers, joining Charles Lamb with Coleridge and Southey. (4) The New Morality is bitter against every new phase of opinion and civilisation. (5) The poems range through all literature for forms to parody. (6) The longer efforts are the best and get at the very heart of revolutionism; The Progress of Man, though in form a burlesque of Payne Knight's Progress of Civil Society, attacks all the phases of it, sentimental, romantic, utilitarian, socialistic. (7) The Loves of the Triangles adheres more closely to its immediate purpose of ridiculing Darwin and parodying his Loves of the Plants. (8) The Rovers burlesques the new German plays with their sentimentalism and matrimonial intricacies. ... ... ... 172—180

**Section 15.**—(1) Gifford had already attacked these plays in his Mæviad. (2) But an even more striking, though more ephemeral, literary fashion was Dellacruscanism, a

hybrid of Wertherism and falsetto lyricism. (3) Gifford had little trouble in satirising it in his Baviad ; for it was ridiculous in most of its features, and a more wholesome poetic taste was rising with Wordsworth and Coleridge. 180—184

**Section 16.**—(1) In his attacks, he joined the study of older English literature with revolutionism ; and to some extent he was right ; for in the new poets and prose-writers all his poetry and his principles of criticism were rejected. (2) English imagination was about to overleap the Queen Anne period and its Cavalier and Restoration predecessors, and find a more national inspiration in the great national age of English history, the reign of Elizabeth, and in the products of the great popular past, the ballads. ... ... ... ... ... 184—186

**Section 17.**—(1) A false start was made by the new poetic spirit with Spenserianism, of which Shenstone's Schoolmistress was the first example ; most of his other work imitates the Queen Anne style ; but some of his elegies anticipate Gray's Elegy. (2) Thomson's Castle of Indolence comes four years later (1746), and, though tinged with burlesque, comes nearer to its model ; it has also more of the new time in it than the rest of Thomson's poetry. (3) The other Spenserians were William Julius Mickle in his Syr Martyn, and James Beattie in his Minstrel ; they also reveal the new poetic sentiment. ... 186—192

**Section 18.**—(1) Gray came also of the Gothic revival ; but, as he addressed an academic audience, was naturally conservative. (2) In his famous Elegy, he was ever conscious of the new audience through the maternal household, for which it was chiefly written ; it is simple in diction and melody, and expresses the simpler emotions of the middle class. (3) His other poems are more formal and more like the Queen Anne verse ; his odes and Collins's reveal a tendency to revolt against the metaphysical didacticisms of the poetry of the time, and yet show its effect in their use of personified abstractions. (4) His later study of the older Celtic and Teutonic literatures brought him into closer touch with the new poetic movement ; and his two great Pindaric odes, The Progress of Poesie, and The Bard, along with half a dozen other lyrical poems were the result. ... ... 192—197

**Section 19.**—(1) Collins also shows the revolt against the heroic couplet, even when in his earlier poems he uses it. (2) There is great variety of metre in his odes ; but the best are those that have Miltonic echoes. (3) He most anticipates the new time in his Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands ; but neither Gray nor he had sufficient strength to develop the new elements. (4) The nation was about to return to primitive sources of national feeling. ... ... ... ... 197—201

**Section 20.**—(1) Macpherson's Ossian is an instance of this. (2) It had great influence all over Europe last century. (3) It originated careful research into Celtic literature. (4) It was of the eighteenth century in its method of treatment of the past. (5) In it he confused various ages and cycles of legend. (6) It is full of the eighteenth century, its nakedness of religion, its humanitarian morality, and its sentimentalism. (7) Eighteenth century ghosts abound in it. (8) It shows a careful study of Homer. (9) It adopts the diction and imagery of the authorised version of the Bible. (10) It avoids anachronisms, adopts figures from the scenery of the Highlands, and often attains genuine poetry. (11.) There is much of the stucco of the eighteenth century in the edifice. (12) Yet it gave a fresh impulse to the period. ... ... ... ... .. ... 201—211

**Section 21.**—(1) Percy's Reliques followed. (2) It was taken from various manuscript and printed sources, and, though despised by the culture of London, became popular. (3) The ballads had greatly deteriorated by transmission and transcription and printing; and Percy still more changed them by revision and addition. (4) In their original form they would not have commended themselves to eighteenth century taste. (5) His book is as much an anthology from known poets as a collection of ballads. (6) The ballads given are from various periods. (7) Their resemblances to ballads of other nations do not all imply community of descent. (8) There is little of fairy lore or the supernatural in them. (9) As the products of the popular imagination, they express the primitive passions, and with the people they were to enter into literature again. (10) The ballads of war and adventure predominate as they suited the time best. Some of them Percy rewrote so as to adapt them to the eighteenth century; Sir Cauline *e.g.* is made less supernatural, less rude, and more sentimental. (11) The copious tears and romance of the new versions were needed for the sensibility of the new time; the emotions of the originals are pre-Christian, tinged sometimes by the age of chivalry, sometimes by the popular fancy; many collections followed. (12) It is always the Border version of an incident, whether Scotch or English, that is the best, and it was out of the ballad districts of the Border that the post-revolutionary renaissance of English poetry and fiction came. ... ... ... ... 211—225

**Section 22.**—(1) The Lowlands of Scotland had mingled the qualities of various races, and, after having been the arena of history, was to be the arena of literature. (2) The history of the district prepared it for literary success in English, and lyrical triumphs in the local dialect by the

eighteenth century. (3) The puritan training of the new audience demanded a revision of the old ballads and songs. (4) Burns came at the meeting time of two great currents of history, and his creed was troubled and uncertain. (5) He mirrored his nation and time, and thus raised their literature to European importance. (6) He was essentially a lyrist belonging as he did to a lyrical age and people. (7) It was the great lyrical period of the Lowlands of Scotland; the sound of Revolution in the distance raised passion to white heat. (8) Robert Burns, born in 1759, grew up in a lyrical and revolutionary atmosphere, and even his earliest attempts show the marks. (9) He came for a time under the influence of Robert Fergusson's satirical and descriptive poems, but in the last period of his life he returned to lyricism, with which he began. (10) He expresses deep sympathy with the lowly and oppressed, and is at times almost socialistic; he appeals often to the brotherhood of man, and his breaches of what is now considered necessary to the dignity of man have failed to be forgotten because he has engraved them so deeply on the page of literature. (11) His attacks on the church are chiefly against the hypocrites in it; and he means to be the friend of true religion. (12) His social satires are more genial; the best is his Tam o'Shanter. (13) His songs represent the true genius of the man. ... ... ... ... 225—241

**Section 23.**—(1) Cowper was, like Burns, a product of his time, and unconsciously anticipated the coming age because he belonged to the new audience. They had a deep fundamental likeness. (2) Cowper addressed the didactic and puritan section of the new audience. (3) His youthful attempts feebly anticipate his mature manner and style. (4) His Olney Hymns and his first satire show none of the power or the imagination of his later poems. (5) Churchill was his model in The Progress of Error; but the spirit is puritan. (6) "Truth" first shows his power as a picturesque satirist. (7) In Table Talk, although he still follows Churchill and Pope, he gives voice to the revolutionary spirit of the new time. (8) In Expostulation he is the Evangelical Jeremiah. (9) Hope and Charity are better, and give some vigorous satiric pictures of the time. (10) Conversation and Retirement are the best; the former especially is full of pungent and ever-relevant satire. (11) In Retirement he is becoming more and more the poet of nature, and less and less a mere satirist and preacher. (12) The minor poems in the volume show the lyricism of the age. (13) The Task (1785) raised him at once into all but the front rank of English poets; its blank verse freed him from his limitations. (14)

Book I., the Sofa, passes from gentle humour into pictures of the country as contrasted with the town. (15) The second book, The Time-piece, is full of eloquent indignation over the state of England. (16) The third book, The Garden, is more eighteenth century in spirit and method, though it has touches of the new philanthropy. (17) In the fourth book, The Winter Evening, he looks with direct and unromantic vision at nature and the state of the country. (18) The fifth book, The Winter Morning Walk, is marked by fine poetic pictures of winter, and by a vehement revolutionism. (19) The last, The Winter Walk at Noon, is longest and most miscellaneous, yet is fullest of sympathy with nature. (20) The Task is significant in the evolution of poetry, as the first poetic attempt to please both the old audience and the new. (21) His later poems show the gathering gloom towards the close of his life, and the growing lyricism. (22) Minor poems and minor poets grew in number towards the close of the century. ... ... 241—262

**Section 24.**—(1) There are many poets known by one brief poem; but the sonnet begins to overshadow all the minor poems. (2) The new hurry of industrial life demanded briefer forms of poetry as of prose; hence the ode and sonnet. ... ... ... 262—263

**Section 25.**—(1) Chatterton was a product of this new movement and of that for older literature and sham-antiques; he started manufacturing old documents and poems in 1763. (2) He became frantic in his efforts to make himself famous by literature and committed suicide. (3) His Rowley poems are most elaborately wrought; but are written in a mongrel language that belongs to no age or locality; the overdone Spenserianism shows a lack of true poetic taste. (4) The drama Aella has some poetry in its lyrics; but most of its poetry is from Spenser, whilst its story and characters are from the romances of the day. (5) The poems are varied and follow the forms and methods of the age. (6) His acknowledged poems, and especially his eclogues, contain his best poetry, though they are also mere echoes. (7) His ambition is greater than his performance; he is nothing when he is not imitative. ... ... ... ... 263—271

**Section 26.**—(1) Blake was as isolated and precocious, but far more original. (2) He was a truer symptom of the coming time; and expressed revolutionism more fully than Cowper; he was a genuine product of a pre-revolutionary age. (3) He printed, illustrated, and published most of his own poems; only a few of them are free from obscurity. (4) His Poetical Sketches were written between twelve and twenty, and have more poetry in two or three of them than in all Chatterton's

work put together. (5) The Songs of Innocence anticipate Wordsworth in their love of simple language, and in their idealism. (6) The Songs of Experience are mystical, pessimistic, and revolutionary. (7) The Book of Thel is the least obscure of his mystical poems; it is an allegory of self-sacrifice as the spirit that lives in nature. (8) He is the most transcendental of all the poets; he hates materialism, the sensuous, and the fleshly. (9) He is the most pronounced poet of revolutionism in all its phases except its atheism, and anticipates all the spiritual qualities of the new poetry and especially of Shelley's. ... ... ... ... ... 271—282

**Section 27.**—(1) Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and Landor were stirred as deeply by the revolutionary impulse which, not being merely political or French, lasted far into our century. (2) Wordsworth felt the French Revolution to be the most natural thing in the world. (3) His early poems, and especially his Evening Walk, are marked by all the qualities that distinguish his poetry; his Evening Walk and Descriptive Sketches are in heroic couplet, yet have little of the Queen Anne spirit. (4) They were unnoticed when published. Yet he continued to write poetry; and his next, Guilt and Sorrow, has the merits and faults of his narrative poems. (5) In the south of England he wrote The Borderers, his only dramatic attempt, full of Elizabethan echoes and passages of power, and worthy of a better fate than it met. (6) His intercourse with Coleridge confirmed the revolution against conventional poetry, and led to the Lyrical Ballads (1798). (7) In this volume there are specimens of his most commonplace narrative style, theory run mad. (8) But the Lines Written above Tintern Abbey ennoble the volume with the new philosophy and worship of Nature. (9) At last the yearning of pastoral poetry had been satisfied in this deeper intercourse with nature. (10) In a passage from The Prelude published in 1799 he finds the same serenity and refuge from the meanness of man in nature. (11) So in "Nutting" we see a passionate, almost personal, love of nature. (12) "A Poet's Epitaph" is the poetic apology for his life, and Lines in Early Spring, and To My Sister express phases of his higher pantheism. (13) His sympathy with lowly human life is generally put into ballad stanza and form. (14) His Essay on Poetry was the manifesto of the new poetic school against the critics; its principles had been already in practice amongst poets. (15) Rural or simple life in common or simple language had been the ideal of Cowper, Burns, and Blake, and was to be the ideal of the coming literature. (16) He almost struck upon the true source of all the new literary

movements, the disturbance of established habits of the people by the industrial current. (17) Truth was his aim in both observation and language, and this came from the re-alliance of literature and national feeling. (18) His chief discovery was that there is no essential difference between the greatest imaginative prose and the greatest poetry. (19) In the latter part of the essay he describes the mission of the poet in language that is as truly poetical as that of his best poetry, and he strikes upon the truth that new ideas have to become familiar to men's minds before they become poetic material. (20) Yet he misses the secret of the power of his own poetry over our century, the interfusion of philosophy and poetry, and the lofty moral attitude. ... ... 282—302

**Section 28.**—(1) Coleridge was more influenced by the romantic and sentimental movements, and appreciated the true spirit of the ballad. (2) The Ancient Mariner is in the ballad spirit, especially its first version; yet it mingles the mediæval, Elizabethan, and modern in the manner of eighteenth century romanticism. (3) The spirit of his own day especially enters into it, and even the collision of the old creed of vengeance and the new creed of love. (4) There is in the ballad a dreamy atmosphere that distinguishes it from the old ballads and kins it with Blake's poems and Turner's pictures. (5) With all its incongruity of materials, it is a true work of art. (6) Christabel is inferior in every respect, although it has the same dreamy atmosphere and finer modern elements in it. (7) The Ballad of the Dark Ladie promised a nearer approach to the true ballad. (8) Kubla Khan was composed in a dream and has the same hypnotic mistiness of outline as the other. (9) His tragedy, Remorse, has many fine passages in it, and is touched with the spirit of the new revolutionary time. (10) It is even in politics revolutionary, as is, still more distinctly, The Fall of Robespierre by Coleridge and Southey. (11) The boyhood and youth of both poets had been marked by revolt. (12) His lectures, Conciones ad Populum, delivered in 1795, and his Poems on Several Occasions, published in 1797, are full of trancendentalism and revolutionism. (13) The sonnets in his first volume of poems are poor in art and violently revolutionary in tone. (14) His Monody on the Death of Chatterton is like an ode in form and combines the personifications of eighteenth century poetry with pantisocracy. (15) "To a Young Ass" is pantisocratic and full of sympathy with animal life; Lewti is sensuous. (16) His Ode to the Departing Year (1796) is still revolutionary; but his splendid "France, an Ode" (1798) recants all his revolutionism. (17) Fears in Solitude, and Frost at

Midnight show strong sympathy with nature. (18) His visit to Germany confirmed his tendency to metaphysics. (19) Not the opium habit or his Germanism, but the ebb of his revolutionary passion, killed the poet in him. 302—324

**Section 29.**—(1) Southey was by nature a prose-writer, raised for a time into poetry by the revolutionary fervour. (2) He was, therefore, a most voluminous poet. (3) His first epic, Joan of Arc, is full of nature-worship, revolutionism, and unitarianism. (4) The Vision of the Maid of Orleans was afterwards made into a separate poem, and, in imitation of Dante, painted the punishments and the bliss of the other world. (5) Thalaba and Madoc followed, the one, an epic of the East, the other of the far west. (6) His early drama, Wat Tyler, is true to history, as well as relevant to the times of Pitt and the French War. (7) His English Eclogues are far more truly revolutionary and socialistic. (8) All through this period he had been writing and publishing short poems, and he collected these in "Metrical Tales" (1805). (9) His ballads are by far the most successful work, especially his ballads of the supernatural. (10) The other sections of his early poems are very varied, both in form and spirit, some of them humorous or satiric, most of them didactic. (11) He had most of the sympathies of the Lake school, but he had none of the emotional qualities that make a man a better writer of poetry than of prose. (12) Landor was revolutionary by temperament as well as by the incidents of his boyhood and youth. (13) His republicanism and his verse never amalgamated, and in his earlier poems he drew his models from the earlier part of the eighteenth century. (14) His later poetic efforts changed their character with the change of his taste in reading. (15) Gebir was his most ambitious effort, and most original; it is a story of conquest, love, and magic. (16) It is marred by singular caprices of diction and style, and yet has felicities that sometimes rise to the Shakespearian in power. (17) His revolutionism peeps through only here and there; it was his later work that showed it most; for he was a revolutionist not from his surroundings, but by his nature. (18) His ferment came when the fetters were soldered down on Europe again; his passion then demanded the dramatic form and at last prose. (19) The whole period was one of preparation for the full and varied development of prose. ... ... ... ... ... 324—344

LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

# THE ERA OF THE EXPANSION OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

1750—1850.

## CHAPTER I.

### General Characteristics and Influences.

### Section 1.

1. It is difficult to fix the termini of any era or period. Any date is an artificial point in the history of a movement or current. For spiritual influences have no definite birth or death. They have a life unseen long before the event or personality that seems to originate them; and when they are supposed to be killed they are only scotched. All changes in the spirit or form of the public products of the human faculties are only stages in their development and not revolutions.

2. But dominant influences have their rise, climax, and declension. These mark off clearly enough one period from another. And history has, for the sake of convenience, had to adopt definite limits for them in fixed dates. Yet it is better, after having adopted such boundary lines, to follow the influences or products beyond them wherever completeness of treatment demands it.

3. The more modern section of English literature can have none of the rounded completeness of the age of Chaucer or the Elizabethan era or the Queen Anne period; for its products are so varied and extensive, the influences that moulded it so numerous, far-derived, and far-reaching

that some of them will seem more naturally to belong to what precedes or what follows.

4. It is this very expansion of English literature in all directions during the last century and a half that demands a period for itself; whilst the latter third of it is still too near us to allow the proper perspective for correct study and classification of its authors and books.

5. In all previous ages the literature of England clustered round some local centre of influence and patronage, which was as a rule the court. Most of the imaginative writers were courtiers or their clients or followers. The chief exception was the seventeenth century, when England was split up into two camps and the books and writers may be arranged without much difficulty into Puritan and Cavalier. But this was followed by a period—that of Queen Anne—which became narrow, if not sectarian, in its centralisation. Though the monarch herself had little to do with this in either force of character or taste, her statesmen emulated the Augustan ages of Rome and France in patronage of writers. It was the great period of political rewards to literary men great and small. And to London all the provincials of ambition or talent found their way sooner or later. A limited standard of taste, a limited clique of critics hedged in both poetry and prose. And though the authors thought they were laying down the ultimate code of literary laws and producing the final forms of literary art, the waters of revolution have swept over the age, and new standards, laws, and forms have antiquated all but the writings of three or four and left these to be read only in fragments or quotations.

6. It was a happy thing for English literature that the first Georges knew little of books and less of English, and that they preferred statesmen that, like Walpole, showed scorn of letters. Without this political repulsion, it might have continued to be for several generations the hanger-on of a court, the hireling of state and politics, and the great decentralisation movement would have been postponed a century or more.

7. Its gradual enfranchisement from patronage during the eighteenth century has been recognised by most as one

of the most striking features of its development. Had even a knot of courtiers or of men of state influence in London continued to protect or encourage young and rising writers by giving them money or sinecures or lending them the publicity of their name, then would English imagination have been "tongue-tied by authority" or narrow fashion; men of letters would have continued to dance to the piping of aristocratic society. A people's literature might have grown up like the ballads or Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress; but it would have been scorned and neglected by literary fame, a mere pariah, emancipated from London convention and London taste.

8. Through the latter half of last century and the first half of this, the process of enfranchisement went on. For even when the life of the writer and the form he adopted had completely thrown off the trammels of court and fashionable society, the spirit remained to some extent enslaved. Several sections of imaginative literature, and especially fiction, continued for generations to prefer themes from high life, and looked upon the life of the people as unworthy of their attention. The tradition that literature is a satellite of courts has been hard to kill, and still lingers about certain types of journalism and fiction.

## Section 2.

1. But the most fundamental expansion of English literature during the era has been that of its audience. The new wealth that invention and enterprise and new markets brought created a new leisured or partially leisured class all over Great Britain. The boundary-line of the struggle for existence receded and left a rapidly-increasing middle class which had not yet scope for its idle hours in the sports and land of the country aristocracy or in the politics and fashion of London life. Its liberated energies and time demanded some amusement or occupation suited to its traditional tastes. It became the new audience of English literature, ambitious in culture, yet largely Puritan in its sympathies, morality, and religion, whether within or without the church.

2. There followed, therefore, from this expansion of the audience what is considered by French critics a serious contraction of the scope of the writers. From Fielding to Thackeray there went on, sometimes slowly, in other decades rapidly, the purification of English fiction. The process was almost complete by 1850, and since that date there has been a tendency to reaction under the influence of French examples. Even Thackeray had begun to feel the limitation; in the preface to Pendennis dated November 26th. 1850, he says "Since the author of Tom Jones was buried, no writer of fiction amongst us has been permitted to depict to his utmost power a man. We must drape him and give him a certain conventional simper. Society will not tolerate the natural in our art." This is putting as a revolution of last century what was a process through the whole period from 1750 to 1850. Novelists who desired to have the widest possible audience had to purify their pages. But the process of expansion had practically only begun in 1750 and for many decades the best writers were able to ignore the new elements in their audience. Even as late as the third decade of our century Shelley and Byron at times broke down the traditional pales of convention and dealt with forbidden topics. But they were bold with the spirit of revolt and they suffered for the outrage.

3. To English literature, the purification has been an enormous, though not unmitigated, gain. It has opened the pages of the ablest and the greatest books to both sexes and to all ages. It has identified the best imaginative literature with the purest, and made prurient literature an outcast without authoritative ally or friend. It has made the possible audience almost co-extensive with the English-speaking world. Whilst it has opened the door for all the noblest passions and emotions into the higher literature; for these are the natural allies of purity.

4. On the other side there has to be set down a certain loss and along with it a certain gain that is not a true gain. Novelists and poets, as Thackeray indicates, had the freedom of their art restricted on the side of the passion of love; they could not paint realistically all that men and women were or could be, as the later Elizabethan and the

Restoration dramatists painted them. But the amorous could not wholly be ejected from imaginative books, least of all from fiction.

5. For the coarser phases of it was substituted the sentimental with a complete set of conventions in phraseology and spiritual attitude. As soon as the audience began to expand in last century, and the expansion began to drive out the unreserved description of lawless love, the artificial substitute appeared, at first mingled in a prudish, condemnatory way with the other, as in Richardson's novels, but afterwards gradually eliminating that which it condemned, as in the ladies' novels at the close of last century. But even as late as the Minerva Press fiction at the beginning of our century, devoted though it was to the romance of love, the pages are not all that the purist would sanction. The artificial substitute for the opener delineation of the passion failed for a time to drive out its antithesis.

6. What aided it most was the inclusion of women in the audience of literature. Expansion in this direction had begun with Addison and Steele and the periodicals they wrote. The Tatler and The Spectator were meant for both sexes, as we can see as well by their topics as by their treatment of them. The coarseness of the Restoration comedy had driven women from the theatre, and Cavalier literature was seldom fit for the eyes of innocence. Addison saw how he could multiply his readers if only he could keep his pages pure.

7. But the expansion in this direction proceeded at a much accelerated rate after the middle of last century. For, where the growth of industrial wealth gave one man leisure, it gave a dozen women most of their time to themselves. Women's education, therefore, became a necessity, and though for almost a century of the flimsiest kind, it was enough to give them a passion for novel-reading. This was the element in the new audience that created a demand for the romances of sentiment and for other books expressive of sentimentalism. The spread of wholesomer ideas and sounder methods of education exorcised this new and sickly spirit before the period closed. But these had to come

from women themselves. The abler and more energetic among them had to find more active spheres than the luxury of novel-reading. Some of them took to novel-writing. It became indeed one of the most striking phenomena of our period, the number of authoresses who appeared. And it was women like Jane Austen, Miss Mitford, Miss Edgeworth, and Miss Ferrier who did most to drive the spirit of sentimentalism out of novels and raise their tone not merely by purer morality, but by gentle satire. Fiction under their guidance took new lines of development; it grew more minute in its observation and more elevated in its purpose. That they joined the ranks of both readers and writers and came to have a foremost place is doubtless one of the reasons why the novel absorbs so much of the literary power of our century.

## Section 3.

1. But almost as important a result of the new wealth and the new leisure was the expansion of the area of English literature, its decentralisation. The new talent formed cultured centres to address outside of London. Hitherto clever young men with a turn for writing had left their native places in Ireland, Scotland, or the country districts of England and settled in the great city. There were the publishers, the critics, the educated audiences, and the patrons. Even the Elizabethan had been a London literature. But in this new era all was changing. Edinburgh became a most important literary rival to the English capital. There were gathered some of the finest philosophical thinkers of the time—Hume, Dugald Stewart, Brown, Lord Kames, Blair, Campbell, Alison, and Ferguson; there some of the finest litterateurs of the period like Christopher North and Hogg and Moir had their centre of inspiration; thither Burns went when he had his poems to publish and patrons to seek; there Jeffrey and Sydney Smith started the Edinburgh Review and attempted to rule English politics and poetry by smart critical essays; thence Scott dazzled the new reading world with his series of romances. And this was not the only literary centre in Scotland; Kilmarnock had its press and its bevy of minor

poets and Glasgow had its Adam Smith. And all over Scotland there was a ferment that produced a rich literature of lyric and story and legend.

2. Ireland, too, though less fertile in writers than it had been in the previous hundred years, had much intellectual life centred in Dublin and her university. Moore and Banim, Lover and Lever never denationalised themselves as their predecessors had done by going to London, though Burke and Goldsmith and Sheridan adopted the life of the English capital as their own.

3. In England itself there was a vigorous decentralisation. Lichfield had its literary clique with Erasmus Darwin as its leader last century. Bristol issued the earlier poems of Chatterton and the earlier volumes of Coleridge and Southey. The English lakes drew round Wordsworth and Southey a lake literary circle. Yorkshire had her Ebenezer Elliot and her Brontës, who remained in the locality and drew, the one from his artisan surroundings, the others from the moors, a distinctive colouring for their productions. The South of England, too, nursed in various rural districts talents that could not have lived in London; Gilbert White and Jane Austen during the earlier part of the period kept to the parishes in which they lived and studied with microscopic care the natural or human history of them. Norwich with her Taylors and Martineaus was one of the first channels for Germanism, and the new philosophical thought and the new revolutionary spirit. Growing industrial centres like Manchester with her Chetham Society, encouraged local literature or research. And the University centres, like Oxford with her religious and philosophical movement of 1840-50, showed signs of imaginative and literary life that had no connection with the capital.

4. There were indications of even more distant revolt against the predominance of London. By the close of last century the New England States of America felt the duty of developing a literature of their own laid upon them by their new independence; and though Washington Irving could not fail to take English writers as his models and sources of

inspiration, yet there is strong local colouring in many of his works, as in his History of New York. And the first half of our century sees Canada enter into English literature with a new flavour of her own in the Sam Slick of Judge Haliburton, although the colonies and India do not appear as distinct English literary centres till after 1850.

5. It was the Mediterranean and especially Italy that drew English talent and especially poetic talent away from London. But this was in the latter half of our period. Goldsmith had finished his education by wandering from the Scheldt to the Po; Gibbon had written much of his Decline and Fall at Lausanne and had visited Italy; Mary Wollstonecraft and some other advanced writers had drunk in the revolutionary spirit in France itself. But there was no migration of writers to continental towns till our own century. Byron and Shelley and Landor showed how inspiring residence in Italy could be for poetic genius; and the Brownings and others followed the example and took up their abode in Florence.

6. There can be little doubt that this was the great era of decentralisation of English literature; and though the movement did not wholly cease after 1850 on account of the great development of the Colonies, of America, and of Anglo-Indian life, it began to receive a distinct check within the United Kingdom itself; London tends to become again the natural centre of English literary life, the exchange and clearing house of English imagination and ideas; thither have gathered again the great publishing houses and the literary ambition of the kingdom, and thence issue again the chief magazines and critical journals. The facilities for travel, that before 1850 had tended to scatter writers and literary influence, are now acting in the opposite direction and gathering the most critical audience and the most ambitious writers into the vast city, that again draws all leisured circles to it as it did in the Queen Anne age.

## Section 4.

1. So great an expansion of area over which literary energy was spread and so vigorous a decentralisation of

criticism and literary influence could not but have a wholesome effect upon the writers and books of the century under discussion. Its best effect was to introduce variety into the themes. Swift and Pope, Addison and Steele, had but a narrow space wherein to show their talent, the topics of the coffee-houses and the gossip of town society. When the imagination and criticism of a people are both practically cooped up within the limits of one city, their influence upon each other is narrowing ; they soon prescribe rigid conventions and a confined sphere to move in; the writers get to feel that all they need for success is the approval of a small circle; a clique comes to tyrannise over national taste. But as soon as this thraldom is broken, and there is a possible appeal to other critics and other centres of taste, new kinds of topics have a chance of being heard, new talent may choose its own theme, new genius may find a public that does not acknowledge the yoke of professional criticism, new schools of thought and art may arise that reject the authoritative models and rules.

2. It was this that occurred between 1750 and 1850—the gradual expansion of the sphere of English literature. Before this, poetry and the drama and fiction moved only in lofty circles; kings and heroes were preferred; but if they could not be found convenient, lords and ladies, courtiers and their parasites, might suffice. If a lowlier social stratum were touched, they condescended to it, either in a humorous or mock-heroic way or in amazement at the traits of humanity to be found in it. The rise of the middle classes to wealth and power brought them above the level of mere literary condescension and opened up many neglected regions to the serious fiction-writer, if not to the poet too. Even Addison looks from above when he treats of any theme or character outside of fashionable London life. Now Goldsmith and Blake and Cowper enter with full sympathy into the life of the lowly and obscure. The evangelical tone of the new wealth and leisure brought sympathy with the oppressed into the sphere of imagination; and one of the distinctive features of the later fiction and poetry of the era is the sympathetic and unpatronising description of the life of the peasant, the artisan, and the slave.

3. Provincial life ceased to be neglected. Towards the close of the period, after Miss Austen, Miss Mitford, and Miss Edgeworth, Scott, and Galt had led the way, it became the favourite scene of fiction. Nor did even poetry leave its pathos and tragedy unsung; it came to have its own poets like Crabbe and Bloomfield, Ebenezer Elliot and Burns.

4. But if themes of heroic level were still to be treated, they were oftener sought in other lands and other times. Two vast new worlds were opened to imagination, the contemporary world outside of England and the world of the past. These had been practically lost to English literature after the Elizabethan era; they were now rediscovered, and the growing insularity of English thought and fancy was broken up. Again imagination ventured out into distant lands and seas and times and reconquered them for the new reading public.

5. Fiction began to search over the whole world for scenes and themes. The new romances of the close of last century found Italy, France, and Spain the best arena for their mystery and sensation. Beckford in his Vathek went as far afield as Persia and Hope in his Anastasius chose modern Greece as his scene; whilst Johnson made Abyssinia the starting-point of his Rasselas. But it was the first half of our own century that expanded the field of the novel most. The women romance-writers especially investigated continental history and contemporary life to find themes. And Scott and Lytton followed. American life, both Indian and Anglo-Saxon, was explored chiefly by American novelists like Fenimore Cooper and Hawthorne. And Eastern life gave themes to Morier and Miss Pardoe.

6. But it was history that gave the most striking expansion to the novel. Scott led the way and by his wizardry drew after him Lytton and most of the fiction writers that followed; even those who had a special genius for other types of novel, like Dickens and Thackeray, made attempts at the historical, the one in Barnaby Rudge and the other in Esmond. And during the first half of our century every age was ransacked for subjects.

7. And it was the expansion of the audience that made the novel the chief imaginative form of our era and gave it an importance and development that quite overshadowed the growth of every other literary form. Narrative is the first literary instinct and desire of men, and through no other portal can the mass of new readers pass into appreciation of literature. The sermon, the speech, the essay soon tire the untrained mind ; and even biography, travel, and history are too systematic and too fond of the bare fact to attract the primitive imagination. It is the story—a section of life told so as to rise to a dénouement—that interests the mind unaccustomed or disinclined to patient or methodical thought ; the child will listen by the hour to it. And the novel was the modern substitute for it, when reading took the place of listening ; or rather, by incorporating the sermon, essay, satire, study of character, philosophical theory, biography, travels, or history in it, it superseded all other literature for the new reading public, in gratifying their primitive passion for narrative. In previous ages of English literature the audience consisted chiefly of a highly educated circle who had had their minds trained in other literatures ; and in the Elizabethan age, the only age when the reading public tended to become the nation, the development of the drama, an art that appealed to the mind rather through spectacle than through literary form, postponed the invention and growth of the novel. It was the new wealth of the eighteenth century that, liberating a considerable section of the English who were able to read from the necessity of continual toil, made fiction a prime essential of English literature. They had from their Puritan traditions an invincible objection to the drama and the impurity of the Restoration theatre confirmed it. A new form of literary art was a necessity, a form that would, in using the love of story, allow of infinite variations of the limited material of story. The number of types of striking incident in human history is soon exhausted ; they repeat themselves with singular monotony in the collections of various nations and ages. The modern novel, by change of scene and character and spiritual atmosphere, by commixture with different forms of literature, drama, satire, history, biography, philosophy, description of nature, succeeded in concealing

the inborn poverty or rather automatism of the story-telling fancy. It is this incorporation of most other literary elements and forms that has made it the dominant form of the nineteenth century. It has fitted itself to almost all classes of readers and threatens to make the primitive instinct for narrative the permanent medium of all literary ideas and imaginings During its earlier stage, from 1750 to 1850, it justified its existence by professing to be the intermediary and teacher for raising the newly enleisured masses into the higher classes of readers. But the gradual recession of the fringe of ignorance has kept adding every decade to the possible audience of literature; and the appeal through fiction to their uneducated minds and inherent preference of story has fixed novel-writing into modern civilisation as a permanent literary habit.

8. During our period it did help to increase the number of readers of other forms of literature. History, biography, travels, the didactic treatise felt the new expansion of sphere and audience too, and flourished as they had not done before. The essay held its own in the latter half of the eighteenth century and was as popular as it had been in the earlier part; whilst in the first half of the nineteenth century it came to be organised into the magazine article.

## Section 5.

1. But it was poetry that next to fiction felt the new impetus most, allied, as it was, as closely with imagination. Though there is no poet in this era to rank with Shakespeare or Milton, there are more of those that may be placed next to them than in any other era—Burns, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Browning; indeed there are not as many in all the rest of English literature put together; whilst of poets of the third rank the number still more exceeds all other periods, Gray, Collins, Goldsmith, Beattie, Blake, Chatterton, Cowper, Crabbe, Rogers, Campbell, Scott, Moore, Southey, Hood, Bowles, Landor, Kirk White, Hunt, Elliot, Hogg, Clough. The list would be greatly lengthened if minor poets and writers of occasional poetry were added. And the excellence and

variety of the technique and style, as well as of the imagination and thought, amongst them would alone be enough to classify this era of expansion amongst great poetic eras.

2. But poetry is more affected by the expansion of thought and feeling than by the expansion of audience or sphere. It had more readers, of course; for the growth of sentimentalism made it a great favourite with the new audience as well as with the old audience of critics and cultured men and women; religious and free-thinking, philosophical and matter-of-fact, scientific and practical, all had their schools or types of poetry to suit their tastes. For its sphere and variety of topics had also widened. In this respect it is a marked contrast to that of the Queen Anne period. It ranges over the whole orb of human knowledge. It emulates like fiction all other forms of literature; and to take its narrative form alone it searches as widely as the novel for variety of scene; from court to peasant's hut, from "China to Peru," from the earliest ages down to contemporary life.

3. It is however, rather in the growth of its thought and inspiration that the century is to be considered a great poetic era. When Johnson wrote his Lives of the Poets, English poetry seemed almost to have completed its cycle. Dryden and Pope were to him the perfecters of it as an art. And it was just at this point, the beginning of the last quarter of last century, that it was about to be reborn to a greater activity of thought and imagination, a greater variety and beauty of art, than it had ever experienced. Burns, Blake, Cowper, and Crabbe were already composing the poems that, published a few years after, were to show that a new era in poetry had come, an era that would rival in power and surpass in variety and scope the Elizabethan. Already had the way been prepared for it, as Johnson might have seen in the popularity of Ossian, in the collection of folk-ballads and songs by Bishop Percy, and even in the new spirit of sympathy with the lowly expressed in the poetry and prose of his own friend and protégé, Goldsmith. Enthusiasm had been driven out by the Queen Anne period; it was now to come back into English literature and especially poetry like a flood. But it could neither ignore

nor overbear the finish that that age had given to English poetic style. Now the exuberance of the Shakespeare time, its fulness of emotion and inspiration, and its lavishness of thought were to be combined in poetry with the choiceness of diction, the polish of style, and the dominance of art, that Dryden and Pope had taught. The poetry of the era was about to take all nature and human nature for its themes, to seek inspiration and models in every age and literature, to reject all the classical rules that criticism had formulated and made tyrannous. It is an era of poetic discovery and rediscovery, and one, too, of rapidly perfecting poetic art. By the close of it nothing but the loftiest thought and emotion put into the most melodious and fitting words could find a permanent place in the literature. Wordsworth and Byron and Browning have been able, from the penetration of their thought or the strength of their character, to outrage the conventional melody and art of poetry at times; but it was at the risk of losing the name of poet with the mass of readers. Rogers, Moore, Landor, and others reached their place as poets chiefly by the excellence of their technique; but they had to exhibit more emotion than the Queen Anne poets and it was only an inferior place they reached.

4. The especial mark of the poetry of this era is its intensity of passion or insight expressing itself in finished or melodious form. And what gave it this intensity was not the new and wider audience but the revolutionary character of the era. Revolution, that never breaks out into civil war, that never involves all the talent of the country in death-grips, works underground and raises the passion of the thinkers and speakers and writers to white heat. The fear of some dread issue makes every man feel and think and speak with vehemence, if not extravagance. Through the whole of the era from 1750 to 1850 the sense of possible explosion in the future pervaded the leading minds of England and filled them with passionate hope or reactionary terror. It rekindled the enthusiasm that had been almost dead in English literature for two generations or more. The flood-gates of emotion were opened. New springs of sympathy broke forth and found channels in the evangelical

movement, the new philanthropy, and such crusades as the anti-slavery agitation. But this resurgence of passion affected literature almost as much; for to it was due the new birth of English poetry, with its strength of thought and character, its fervour of temperament, and its freshness of inspiration.

5. It was not the French Revolution alone that stirred such excitement in English feeling, though that gave body and form to the inner fears and hopes that had long haunted the English mind. The American revolution had already shown how real was the possibility of successful revolt against long-established authority and precedent. And though the Reign of Terror and the Napoleonic wars made reaction seem patriotic and be strong, no sooner did this foreign fear subside than the suffering masses expressed their passion in riot and revolt. Advancing legislation, however reluctant, assuaged the fear of worse and brought the more confident and prosperous section of the people over to the side of government. The French revolutions of 1830 and 1848 stirred to new life the old hopes and fears, and Chartism gave them semblance of possible realisation. But after 1850 the growth of philanthropy and of sympathy with the people has led the aggrieved to think rather of reform through legislation than of revolution. The century from 1750 to 1850 may well be called the English era of suppressed revolution.

6. And it was this veiled passion that made it so great a poetic era at a stage in the development of English literature when poetry might have been expected to give way to prose. After so many generations of criticism and of conscious effort in literature English genius with surprising recoil sprang back into the rapt attitude that true poetry demands. After Addison and Pope and Johnson it is difficult to realise how there could have come a Blake, a Wordsworth, a Keats, a Shelley. Yet there is nothing wonderful in it, when we understand that all through this great era there was a wild ferment in the English mind and that it never found issue in politics or civil war. There is something of the seer in much of the work of these poets, and this implies at least a partial return of the poetic soul

of the time to the simplicity and inspiration of earlier ages, an indication strongly confirmed by the resurgence and rapid growth of the primitive passion for narrative. Even Byron, self-conscious and vain though he was, belongs his naïve egotism and the fervid rush of his poetry to a time like that of the trouvères, if not like that of the old bards. And even if Ossian had wholly belonged to the eighteenth century, as much of the sentiment and style undoubtedly does, it would have been no false sign of the coming inspiration in poetry. There was a torrent-like advance in the imaginative work of the era that ill-brooked the check of criticism.

7. Nor is this strange phenomenon due to mere reaction from an artificial and unenthusiastic period. Reaction alone increases the volume and power of a movement and does not originate. If we trace it back to its ultimate cause, we shall find it in the expansion of the area of thought and feeling throughout the era. The organisation of industry brought the scattered population of England into teeming centres, in which thought and feeling tend to be epidemic. Town life concentrates discontent and gives it vital nuclei. And the predominance of it in a nation or an age fosters revolutionary tendencies. New ideas move more quickly than in a rural people. And any talent for speech or writing that appears catches the newest passion and gives it utterance. But even if no talent arises in the new urban masses, they join the reading public and give a new impetus to a writer, from whatever class he may come. The era saw the possibilities of an audience for literature widened more and more ; it annexed first the new middle class and during our own century the new industrial classes. The first half of it fitted English literature to the new wealth and leisure that the growth of industry and commerce produced. It was the other half of it that consummated this adaptation and grew conscious of the vast field still to be cultivated in the artisans themselves. It was, taken as a whole, the great era of middle class literature ; but it was for a middle class not yet far enough separated from its relations to labour to lose sympathy with it. The poor and lowly, the toiling and oppressed had

their full share in the poetry and other imaginative productions of the period, even though it was only towards the close of it that the working classes began to be part of the audience; and by that time a section of the middle class was losing touch with labour.

8. During the time that the new wealth was kept out of politics by the aristocracy and their followers, it sympathised with revolutionary tendencies till the Reign of Terror alarmed a large section of it into reaction. Goldsmith, Burke, Cowper, and Crabbe wrote for it and were essentially conservative in their religion and politics; and yet their productions are full of the new philanthropy, the new feeling for the oppressed. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey began their literary career by the greatest enthusiasm for revolutions and revolutionists; but the development of events in Paris during 1792 threw them violently back upon tradition, never, however, to be wholly free of the passion and the broader thought that the revolutionary spirit bred. Blake, Burns, and Godwin were by nature outcasts and rebels and lost little of their sympathy with the new movement during the eighteenth century.

9. It was the first quarter of our own century that saw the most violent reaction against the revolutionary spirit. But after that it began to gather renewed energy and step by step to find its way into politics as reform. The impulse it had given to poetry suffered no backward movement; for only opinions and political action were affected by the recoil. The tide of poetic passion flowed on unchecked till it exhausted itself in the latter half of our century. Nay, poets like Byron and Shelley had increase of fervour from the revulsion. The whole of the imaginative literature, even that which was produced by the most conservative of natures, like Scott's, felt the impetus; the thoughts were expanded, the passion was intensified.

## Section 6.

1. Every human thought or relation, however old or threadbare in its literary treatment, took new colour and life. It glowed with such passion that it seemed to the writers and speakers to be born again. Such a hackneyed theme

as love, dealt with a thousand times over from Chaucer to Herrick, counted dead or at least artificial for a century, awakened to a new existence and was sung in an infinite variety of new tunes and songs from Burns to Tennyson, whilst in the hands of the novelist it seemed to have entered on perennial literary life. The relation of man to his past was again steeped in imagination and feeling, not by the birth and marvellous growth of historical fiction alone, but by means of the new science and the philosophy based on it. English and classical history had already fully occupied the English fancy during various eras. But from the point of view of the new thoughts of mankind as consisting, not merely of monarchs, nobles, and warriors, but of merchants, and artisans, and toilers of all kinds, these had again to be studied, again to be worked up by the literary arts. There was an even vaster expansion of his relation to his past. Science had begun to see that his existence upon earth reached far beyond the beginnings of history; and the civilisations of the East and of America, the slave and the savage gave new themes and new thoughts to literature; nor can it ever return again to the insularising treatment of civilised history. The new philosophy, too, based as it was upon science, threw a new imaginative halo around old questions; the fountain and birth of the soul, the sources of its instincts and unaccountable memories, its nature and destiny were treated again and again both from the materialistic and idealistic side with such freshness and poetic fancy as made them seem new; Wordsworth in his Ode on the Intimations of Immortality and Shelley in his Queen Mab and Epipsychidion are examples of the beauty that the new passion could give to abstract topics such as these.

**2.** Still more was man's relation to nature recreated. Science had raised the curtain upon an infinite universe of which the earth was but an atom, and endowed it with an existence into which man's terrestrial life seemed to vanish. Yet he began to feel himself more and more a part of all that he surveyed or knew. The animals, that had been to him before only pieces of matter moulded and animated to serve his wants, now claimed more intimate connection, and stretched the chain of their existence myriads of ages beyond

his past. The plants and rocks, the seas and winds had now a nature and a history as full of meaning as he had himself. No wonder that he began to recognise in his best self a living sympathy with all these, a kinship that was not to be denied, and a spirit of beauty that had escaped his mental vision before. Wordsworth most fully and poetically expressed the revolution in his attitude to nature; but Burns, Shelley, and Tennyson had as genuine an insight into it; and no modern English writer can well be called poetic without emotional recognition of it. We find it as early as The Seasons of Thomson; and it gained strength and fulness of spiritual meaning as the era went on.

3 Man's relation to his future was as much renewed and idealised. In previous ages the speculation, whether imaginative or practical, on what man was to be, was limited and narrow. Books like the Utopia and the New Atlantis dealt with the problem in rigid relation to his actual state, either political, social, or educational. Now thought reached out to limits far beyond the practicable. Godwin and Shelley especially indulged in dreams that seemed to them feasible. The Political Justice of the one, written in philosophical prose with cool self-repression anticipates the most advanced dreams of the anarchists of our own day; whilst the Queen Mab, Laon and Cythna, and Prometheus Unbound of the other tell in impassioned poetry the hopes of the future of man that the revolutionary spirit stirred. These productions belong by nature to an era of revolution and express in the most striking way the thoughts that haunted the minds of the most advanced thinkers. And there were few imaginative writers but had in them as they wrote some picture of man's destiny, optimistic or pessimistic according to their revolutionary or reactionary tendencies. It was the uneasy sense of coming change, of threatened overthrow of convention and tradition that set men looking into the future.

4. But perhaps the most complete transformation by feeling was that of man's relation to God. Even the believers in the earlier part of the eighteenth century were cold, theological, and apologetic in their religion; they argued out rather than felt it. The sense of the relationship

to the divine power was practically lost; and there was an unreality about all worship in the age of common-sense. But before the middle of the century everything religious had begun to change. Wesley and Whitefield were preaching their crusade against formalism by the time that Butler had published his Analogy and Pope his Essay on Man, the two most striking attempts to place religion on a basis of rationality. And before the century closed, the Evangelical movement within the Church and Methodism outside it had gone far to set English religious thought on fire; the era, as far as the majority of the nation were concerned, may be classed with the ages of faith, so fervid and crusading did it become on its religious side.

5. Nor was this due to reaction alone, though reaction explains more in the sphere of faith than in those of thought and imagination. The old Puritanism of England, that had retired crushed after the Civil War, had begun again to hold up its head; the growing comfort or wealth of the middle class gave it confidence in its traditional religious feelings, and the uneasiness of suppressed revolution gave warmth to them. The Bible and the Pilgrim's Progress, their literary legacy from the previous century, again became suffused with the glow of practical faith; and books of piety began to increase and pass into household gods. The mood became lyrical and fervid; hymns grew apace in the era. By the middle of it the bulk of the English religious world had outlived the necessity of reasoning out their faith. Paley's Evidences of Christianity with its cool utilitarianism is addressed rather to the upper stratum of culture wherein the old deism lingered than to the new reading public.

6. Even the deism had come to be transfused with passion. There is far less argument and reasoned statement in Paine's Age of Reason than fervid rhetoric, vituperation, and scorn. And we have only to look into Shelley's Queen Mab to see how the Revolution had transformed the old scepticism and attacks on Christianity into ardent crusades. It is not surprising, then, that religion itself had kindled into a blaze that warmed the church to missionary zeal. The secular literature felt the glow; Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and many more of the poets have none of the

reserve the Queen Anne writers had shown on the subject of piety. And a large section of imaginative literature devoted itself to the new religious ardour; writers like Cowper and Kirke White, Bernard Barton and James Montgomery, Heber and Keble, Pollok and Graham abounded. And even those who were accounted worldlings, like Burns and Byron, are seldom unconscious of the new philanthropy, while at times, as the one in his Cottar's Saturday Night, and the other in his Hebrew Melodies, they catch some of the new glow of religion.

7. The era is, in short, the renaissance of feeling in English literature. Its whole thought is transfigured by passion. Philosophy both in poetry and prose deals in a reverent way with the mysteries of existence and man's relations to them. Wordsworth in his Ode on the Intimations of Immortality and Shelley in his Prometheus Unbound, Tennyson in his In Memoriam and Browning in his Paracelsus reveal how nobly secular thought could now deal with the loftiest religious problems; in these there is no attempt to conciliate orthodoxy, and yet the most worshipful might draw from them new strength; they amalgamate poetry and philosophy and raise the treatment of the fundamental questions of life to that elevated phase which they reach in the greatest poets, like Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton. It is the revolutionary, passion-transfigured age rather than the individual that has accomplished this.

## Section 7.

1. And in the light of the new enthusiasm all knowledge had to be reorganised. It is, like all great eras, marked by encyclopedism. Stirred to activity by the rapid expansion of the audience and the eagerness of the newly-leisured class for light upon the world around them and within them, scientists and scholars set themselves to focus all that was known. On the Continent, as in England, the passion for universal knowledge had to be satisfied. In France the phenomenon appeared as a phase of revolutionism; Diderot's Encyclopédie, like Bayle's Dictionary before it, attempted to mould opinion as well as communicate information; and by its sceptical tendencies helped to overturn the old world

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of thought and social and political custom. In Britain many great cyclopaedias were published during the era; but none of them attempted to do more than concentrate and systematise all knowledge or some great department of it. They did not speculate but report; they did not preach creeds but only communicated information in a classified form. And yet the phenomenon was closely connected with the revolutionism of the era, as well as with the expansion of the audience. It was felt that all knowledge had to be summed up again in the light of the new enthusiasm; the whole universe had completely changed, because man's spirit had changed its attitude to it. They were, therefore, unconsciously saturated with the changing thoughts, and the thoughts that were about to introduce still greater change. The inconsistencies of items and departments of knowledge, the clash of what were universally accepted as facts, came into strong light even for the ordinary reader in these summaries of all that was known. They therefore excited thinkers, especially in science, to find conciliating theories or principles; they roused speculation and supplied stimuli and materials for a new type of scepticism. And as the era proceeded their use spread more widely and found its way even among the new industrial classes. The first half of our century saw the beginning of that great movement towards the cheapening of literature and manuals of knowledge which has brought the best books and the newest advances of thought within the reach of the poorest.

**2.** The development of journalism and magazinism was a part of the same phenomenon. The desire for fuller and more accurate knowledge of events and facts, and interest in the newest speculations and researches spread from the small circle of cultivated men in London to which it had before been confined till they reached all but the uneducated. A method of intimating to the reading public the progress of the world at briefer and more regular intervals than the publication of books became a new necessity. A periodical literature was an essential result of the expansion of the audience, of the rapidly spreading interest in mankind as a whole and in nature, and of the new passion for conquest in the realms of speculation and knowledge. There had

been a few straggling attempts at it since the revolution of 1688 and the liberation of the press; but it now began to be one of the important features of civilisation. A few of the greatest daily and weekly journals were started in the last quarter of last century, and the most prominent had been established by the middle of our century. And the essay-periodical of the Queen Anne period, generally the rostrum of some one didactic writer and lasting at most two or three years, now became the organised magazine having an editor and a varying staff of writers and running through long periods. Whilst the rapid increase in the publication of books demanded a new type of periodical, the review. Even the most cultivated and omnivorous of readers had not time to test all the new productions of the press, and some professional and regular guide was needed to give an account and criticism of the ablest and most useful of them. The Edinburgh Review and The Quarterly Review were started early in our century to supply the want. These were published only four times a year; but as the century went on, monthly and even weekly reviews became necessary.

3. The same activity and expansion showed themselves in the study and criticism of the literature of former ages. A deeper and more intelligent appreciation of Greek and Latin classics came into vogue. The new effort and capacity to enter into the civilisation and spirit of other ages extended to their books. And scholarship ceased to be a thing of "shreds and patches", a mere revision of the languages according to new standards of criticism. The scholar or translator was now generally a man of imagination and poetical sympathies; he tried to get behind the mere form of the book he manipulated and set himself at the point of view of the author. Translations began to give much of the essence of the original. And hence it was that Keats, without knowing Greek, was able to take the Greek standpoint in his work and produce poems that are acknowledged to be Hellenic in their spirit and beauty, though modern and sensuous in their art.

4. But there was also a vast expansion of scholarship. The literatures of other countries than ancient Greece and Rome were discovered to be worthy of careful study.

France had already supplied frequent sources of inspiration in former ages of English literature; and so had Spain and modern Italy. But Germany was a new discovery; and Sweden, Holland, and Russia began to attract translators and students to their contemporary, if not to their folk, literature. The East, too, for the first time came upon the scene; the rapid extension of European and especially English conquests in Asia drew the attention of scholars, like Sir William Jones, to the antiquity of its literatures. Persia and India became new sources of inspiration for the imaginative writer. Moore and Southey are only prominent instances of poets that sought in them themes and material for their poetic work. And Beckford's Vathek was only the beginning of a long series of fiction that laid its scene in the East.

## Section 8.

1. The greatest discovery of English scholarship was the literary past of its own country. A few spasmodic attempts at Shakespeare criticism and revision heralded an era that might almost be called the Shakespeare era, so dominated was its scholarship by study of the great dramatist. A new method of looking at him and his contemporaries was established by Lamb and Coleridge, a method based upon imaginative sympathy and poetic insight; they were not thought of now as mere playwrights and dealt with merely by stage managers and adapters; they were looked on as poets whose works could afford new fountains of wisdom and inspiration; they were sought by thinkers and philosophers and artists who could find in them the most living illustrations of their own department of thought or art. It was really due to the reappearance of the people as the best part of the audience of literature that this revival of Elizabethanism became so influential amongst writers; the popular or rather national instinct had ceased to be a factor in moulding the fashionable and recognised literature of England since the age of Elizabeth; and its resurgence gradually made the new era one of nationalism and a national literature. The narrow pales that the Queen Anne period had set up were broken down and the old fertility of

thought and fancy and exuberance of language and metaphor reappeared ; but the demand for literary finish established by the age of Pope and Addison excluded the Elizabethan eccentricity of style and form. Spenser was, as often before, a source of inspiration for poets ; but none would now imitate him in the elaboration of allegory or the intricacy of rhythms or the artificial use of archaisms. The true influence of his spirit and imagination begins ; Cowley and Dryden and Pope speak of him as their early master in verse ; but their poetry shows scarcely a trace of him. Keats was the first genuine poet-student of his Faery Queen ; Thomson and Shenstone were too near to the Queen Anne period to follow anything but its form in the Castle of Indolence and the Schoolmistress. But it was the drama of the Elizabethan age that chiefly moulded the poetic spirit of the new era ; for the drama was the only section of its poetry that was truly national ; the rest of its literature was more dependent on court patronage and the appreciation of cultivated and scholarly circles. The plays, though also addressed to the courtiers, were meant primarily for the people ; and it was the popular spirit that moulded their thought and feeling ; it was the nation that gave them its own life. This is the reason that, when the people came again into English literature in our era, writers found most inspiration in the drama of the Elizabethan period.

**2.** The conclusion is confirmed by other features of the scholarship of the time. One of the most fertile of all the reproductions of the latter half of the eighteenth century was the Reliques of Ancient Poetry published in 1765. This was an attempt to present in popular form the ballads and songs that were the remains of the former unwritten literature of the people. Age after age had added to them, improved them or mutilated them ; and Bishop Percy tried to piece the fragments together. No event is so good a sign of the coming amalgamation of the scholarly audience and the popular as the publication of this book. A people that could make and appreciate such beautiful narrative and lyrical poetry, if it became educated enough to listen to higher and more prolonged strains, was certain to transform English literature. Although the book was not a great

success at first, the very fact of its publication by a scholar like Percy and the fact that Shenstone meant to share in the work of editing, whilst the poets and scholars of the day gave encouragement to the undertaking, show better than any other literary event the renaissance of the old poetic instincts of the people and the coming passion for romance and sentiment in literature. It is true that the literature of the new religious movements—the sermons and hymns and pietistic books of methodism and evangelicalism—does not for many years reveal any very high standard of style, or any demand for imaginative work. Even literary art was shunned as sinful by the new religious instincts of last century. Not till Cowper was there any sign of the approach of faith and art in writing. But there was a secular side to the new confidence of the people in their own desires and instincts. They were not all or always listening to sermons or singing hymns or reading books of devotion. We know from the story of Burns's life how even in pious households, like that of his father, the old songs were sung over the cradle and by the winter hearth, and the old ballads were treasured in the memories of even religious women like his mother. It was this survival of the old popular poetry, taking strength from the new passion, that accounts to some extent for the appearance of such a poet. And around him we can see from his epistles and addresses, there abounded throughout his native district minor secular poets and strong secular poetic instincts for the appreciation of even his most scathing attacks on religious hypocrisy. And this state of poetic sentiment and power could not have been confined to Ayrshire ; the whole of the kingdom must have felt the renaissance of the people, and their more natural tastes in imaginative work.

3. The publication of Ossian and the antique form adopted by Chatterton in his attempts to gain a hearing point in the same direction. There must have been a larger audience than mere antiquarians for the old narrative poetry of the people. Indeed antiquarianism was but another symptom of the revival of the popular past, of the resurgence of the nation in the broader sense of the term. What had been buried in oblivion by the polished

sectarianism of the seventeenth century with its Stuart jealousy of popular rights and its civil wars, and by the urban narrowness of imagination and literary interests in the Queen Anne period now found resurrection, at first indiscriminately, and afterwards with growing power to distinguish good from bad. The nation was about to take the place of a mere section of it, whether court or aristocracy. And everything that seemed to come from the national past on the other side of the Stuart misdirection of national energy attracted attention. Celtic or Saxon it was all the same; it chimed in with the growing desire and consciousness of a national life. Nay, a fictitious past had to be manufactured to meet the new demand. Historical romance sprang into being, and lived a quick, almost unnaturally exuberant, existence during the greater part of the era. Not satisfied with this the earlier half of it had to read its new sentiments into other ages. It was this that made so popular the strange amalgam of eighteenth century feelings and the fragmentary legends of an almost forgotten Celtic past, worked up by Macpherson into his Fingal, an epic poem published in 1762, and Temora published in 1763. The two, professing to be the production of an ancient Celtic bard Ossian, in spite of the critical controversy that raged over them and tended to prove them forgeries, fascinated the spirit of the time. They gratified the passion for the heroic or national past of great races, perhaps the most striking sign of the new birth of the nation; whilst they fed the love of romance and the sentiment that were to hold sway in imaginative literature for half a century or more. The admiration for this modernised prose epic and its medley of eighteenth century Homerism, rhetoric, and sentiment with the floating imagery and ideals from a great Celtic past spread to the Continent and deeply impressed Goethe and Napoleon, and along with them, German, Russian, and French literature.

4. Throughout the whole era this interest in the past grew rapidly. Individual antiquarians were unable to supply its demands, although more men of ability devoted their time to gratifying it than in all the other eras of English literature put together; men like the Wartons,

Tyrwhitt, Pinkerton, Ritson, Ellis, Collier, Halliwell, Maidment, and Walter Scott set themselves to rescuing from oblivion every relic they could find of the national past. Many private gentlemen set up presses that occupied themselves chiefly with reproducing old books and pamphlets and fragments of popular literature; the Strawberry Hill press of Horace Walpole, the Lee Priory press of Sir Egerton Brydges, the Middle Hill press of Sir T. Phillips, the Auchinleck press of Sir J. Boswell, the Darlington press of G. Allan issued between four and five hundred reprints. Yet societies were needed as well to cope with the new demand for the preservation or revival of the past. The Record Commission and the Master of the Rolls began their long task of printing or publishing accounts of important historical documents. And some twenty or thirty literary corporations, like the Maitland Club, the Bannatyne Club, the Surtees Society, the Hakluyt Society, the Aelfric Society, the Caxton Society, the Early English Text Society and the Shakespeare Society were established during the first half of our century and published hundreds of old works and documents from forgotten corners of libraries. Antiquarian and dryasdust though these labours may now seem, they were no merely factitious amusement of learned leisure, but the outcome of the renewed national life and an essential basis of the new literature. Without them the fiction of the era, and especially Sir Walter Scott's use of it, would have been maimed; poetry would have lacked many of its new themes and inspirations; and nineteenth century history, with its fuller and more accurate use of contemporary material from the age it studies, could scarcely have existed.

5. English scholarship on the one hand and the English language and national life on the other had been brought together for the first time. For although the drama had appealed to the whole nation in the reign of Elizabeth, the more cultured sections of literature and the scholarship never appealed to it or worked for it, unless we include sermons and hymns in these. In all previous periods classical studies had absorbed the best energies of English scholars. Now, though these were by no means neglected,

it was the native literature that roused the greatest enthusiasm in scholarly minds; and it was the native literature that supplied the best materials and models and sources of inspiration for imaginative work.

**6.** For English literature now outgrew the narrowing pales that patronage and courtly circles had set up. It emancipated itself from the yoke of city or court fashion for the first time. There was now such a large reading public that at least the great authors had sufficient emolument from the unassisted sale of their books. An audience personally unknown to them stimulated their imagination without cramping it. Even when criticism came to be organised and professional, and stood at the entrance to the new auditorium of literature, demanding attention to certain conventional rules and forms, new authors of striking originality have been able to overleap the barriers and find a public for themselves. The latter half of the era has especially been productive of new types of poetry and fiction and of new literary channels of ideas. It was not the new elements of the audience that caused the appearance of so much exceptional literary talent; but they permitted it freer scope for originality. Goldsmith, Cowper, Burns, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Byron, Tennyson, Browning, Gibbon, Burke, Godwin, Bentham, Scott, De Quincey, Landor, Thackeray, Hallam, Macaulay, without the nation to address, would have been narrowed in their ideals, thought, and form, and many of them would probably have sought other spheres than literature for their activity and character. The new and more national audience first attracted them to writing, then moulded their genius and gave it stimulus and purpose and lastly enabled them to ignore whatever hostile criticisms culture, scholarship, and professional journalism might pass upon their earlier efforts. There is nothing in the whole history of literature to compare to the effect of the expansion of the audience during this era.

**7.** But there are two distinct divisions of the movement. One, extending from about the middle to near the end of last century, is more preparatory in its characteristics; the other, covering the first half of our century, fulfils it and

completes it. We feel that there is some common quality in the poetry of Wordsworth, Byron, and Tennyson, that is not to be found in Goldsmith and Crabbe, or even Cowper and Burns, a sense of the mystery of life and passion and thought. So the imaginative work of Scott and Lytton and Thackeray has in it a consciousness of the great problems that lie before the human mind, when Richardson and Fielding, Smollet and Horace Walpole lack it completely. It is undoubtedly the French Revolution that parts the era in two. The English mind, though restless with suppressed passion for revolt long before 1792, had not experienced how much revolution might mean till the last years of last century. It had not felt how tragic contemporary history might be. The great French cataclysm revealed the dark depths of the problems of human nature, political and social, and the dread possibilities of national movements. English literature of the era of expansion, therefore, naturally divides into that before the close of last century and that after the tragic revelation of human possibilities given by the reign of Terror and the events that followed.

## CHAPTER II.

### Special Characteristics and Influences.

### PERIOD OF PREPARATION.

### 1750—1800.

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### Section 1.

**1.** There is, of course, something of reaction implied in the earlier part of a new era—reaction against the dominant fashions of thought and feeling. For the new can antiquate the old only by antagonistic criticism of it. But there is also the living connection of development between two adjacent periods. Out of the old must grow the new. The thoughts and methods and symbols of the old must be used by the new to overthrow its power; else it could never appeal or make itself intelligible to the human beings who have been nurtured in the old. The process of development has two movements, rejection of the elements and forms that have begun to decay and would clog progress, and acceptance of the living elements and forms that still mingle with these.

**2.** We have no difficulty in tracing the influence of the age of Queen Anne over the literature of the latter half of last century. Down even to Byron Pope was the master-spirit in poetry, though the Wordsworthian protests indicated that his reign was about to end. English Bards and Scotch Reviewers, his first success, is moulded by admiration for the Dunciad. But it and Gifford's Baviad and Maeviad show the last flicker of the Queen Anne satire, that incarnation of the spirit of revenge by means of stinging personalities on rival authors so epigrammatic as to be quotable.

3. Through this whole period there were few poets who did not acknowledge some allegiance to the rhythmic phrase-maker of the Queen Anne period. The satires of Johnson — London (1738), and The Vanity of Human Wishes (1749), though steeped in pessimism and Juvenalian gloom, were written under the shadow of Pope. But his Lives of the Poets, composed as late as 1779, and revealing signs of a new and more natural method of prose, is still guided in all its criticisms and dicta by the standards of Dryden and Pope and exhibits unbounded admiration of these two great poets. Gray and Collins, though coming at the beginning of the era, and touched with its love of pathos, its naturalness and emotionalism, fill their odes with the personified abstractions of the great metaphysical period of poetry. Dyer, Armstrong, Akenside, Grainger, Erasmus Darwin, writing though they do in the latter half of the century, are as much given over to the didactic spirit as Pope and his contemporaries in their versified essays. Even the new nature poets cannot throw off the yoke. Goldsmith, Falconer, Cowper, Crabbe, Rogers, and Campbell have to adapt the heroic couplet to the new purpose of sympathetic description. And whenever satire is attempted, it has to echo Pope's manner, even when its spirit is new as in Cowper's earlier poems. Christopher Smart's Hilliad, Churchill's Rosciad, Wolcot's Lousiad, Gifford's Baviad prove by their very titles the Dunciad as the source of their inspiration. Even Shenstone, Beattie, Chatterton, and Burns, though turning back to an older and more natural era for their models, have some tinge of the Queen Anne period in their methods of art; they cannot keep wholly free from the conventional abstractions that had made poetry so frigid, from the conventional talk about the muse that grows so tedious in the poets of the earlier part of the century, or from the artificial atmosphere that had separated the pastoral and lyric from nature.

4. Still more did the prose of the period acknowledge in its style and diction its descent from that of a pseudo-classical era. It was natural for Adam Smith and Paley and Bentham and even Gibbon to adopt a diction highly Latinised and a heavy yet balanced style; it suited the

purposes of philosophical discussion and historical description. But the same diction and style cling to the more imaginative literature too; the light social essay in Johnson's Rambler and the other periodicals of the time is often elephantine in its movement. Burke in his speeches prefers the involved period and the difficult, intricately woven style of an inflected language. Even the novel falls into ponderous rhetoric in its descriptions, sentimental passages, and conversations. One would expect the epistolary style to have first emancipated itself from the stiff brocaded eloquence of the Queen Anne period; yet when we turn to the letters of Burns, we find them modelled on those of Pope, always laboured exercises in trying to be unaffected, often pompous expressions of fine sentiment.

## Section 2.

**1.** The first half of the era is the long struggle of the more natural English mind with the precedents that the genius of Dryden and the art of Pope had fixed for eighteenth century literature. The turmoil and passion of the French Revolution liberated the new spirit from the coils of tradition and made originality and a more natural manner easy for nineteenth century writers.

**2.** The latter half of the last century never saw the new spirit wholly freed from the yoke of the Augustan Age, except perhaps in Blake and in the Lyrical Ballads of Wordsworth and Coleridge. For the revolutionary movement in England seldom became overt as it did in France, and it found satisfaction in the spheres of religion, philanthropy, and emotional and imaginative literature. The struggles for the rights of public meeting, of petitioning parliament, of publication of the debates in the House of Commons, of uncontrolled elections and of free speech and free journalistic comment on the actions and words of public men were symptoms of the revolutionary fervour that existed in England. But they only once approached the form of outbreak and riot, during the controversy about John Wilkes. The much later Lord George Gordon Riots and the Birmingham Riots of 1793-94 were reactionary in purpose though revolutionary in form. Some of these

rights were partially or wholly conceded, whilst the opposition of authority to the others was not paraded. Such galling abuses of power as oppressed the middle classes and peasantry in France had ceased to exist, thanks to the great struggle of the seventeenth century. There was plenty of injustice, both in the laws and customs, and in the use made of them; but the growth of industry and commerce, whilst urbanising a large part of the population, spread more comfort amongst them, and the memory of the Civil War and its horrors still gave them wholesome warning. The Commons, therefore, never assumed the bold attitude and character of the French National Assembly; the system of party government gave free vent in it to revolutionary ardour, like the sympathy with the American colonies in their revolt; the remedy of abuses was postponed till legitimate means could be adopted. The French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, the one by its terror, the other by the patriotism and warlike passion they excited and by their drafting off the restless elements out of England, produced a violent reaction and sent the English revolutionary spirit underground. They postponed reform for a generation or more.

3. The middle classes sought, in most cases unconsciously, other vents for the revolutionary instinct, that had begun to work in their hearts. They felt, as they had never felt before, the woes of life. Johnson's deep-rooted pessimism belonged as much to his age as to himself; only he accepted it as the law of nature. His contemporaries on the Continent blamed the government and social institutions for what is really the outcome of the struggle for existence. His countrymen either accepted it as a legitimate theme to weep over, and indulged in sentimentality, or set themselves to cure it by preaching and praying or crusading against the more crying abuses of custom. They never thought of attributing it all to political or social institutions. The resurgent puritanism of the new classes sent them back to original sin as the source of it. The more secularised sections of them took with Howard to philanthropy or with Wilberforce and Clarkson and Granville Sharpe to anti-slavery agitation; prison reform and the decision of Lord

Mansfield that whoever touched the soil of England was free were but the outcome of the unconscious revolutionism of the time. The worldly section of the new wealth was quite as conscious of the sadness and the wrongs of life. But the consciousness drove them to no action, in fact never demanded action, as it did in the readers and followers of Rousseau in France. They were satisfied with tears and sighs over the picturesque stories of the woes of men and the pains of animal life. And from Richardson on to Mrs. Radcliffe there were always writers and especially writers of fiction ready to supply cheap stimulus of lachrymation. And there is nothing reveals the sentimentalism of the period so well as the fountain of tears that Sterne could turn on in his books at a moment's notice. In this it forms a marked contrast to the Queen Anne period, which laughed down all enthusiasm and was ashamed of the unrestrained expression of emotion. Nor was the luxury of self-commiseration and sentimentality over the lot of men and animals confined to England. Rousseau's Julie and Goethe's Werther were only the most prominent symptoms of the same disease of the feelings in France and Germany. It was a result of the revolutionism of the times ; the coming industrialism and the development of urban life had opened the eyes of a new class to the abuses that had seemed consecrated by time and privilege. The aristocracy were smitten with the same passion for city life and ceased to fulfil their feudal duties to the people of their districts without ceasing to draw the revenues that were attached to those duties. Personal loyalty vanished and the one-sided nature of the relationship stood out in all its nakedness. The new reading public in the growing towns, with their comfort and leisure, wept over the injustice of their own position and the wrongs of the peasantry. But in France the increase of financial pressure on the government and through taxation on the new classes and the rustics made the sentimentality practical. Unless the burden were removed, the new feeling was certain to find volcanic issue. Hence it is that Rousseau and similar writers charge political and social institutions with the existing misery and preach a return to a state of nature free from the evils of government and society.

4. In England this revolutionism was in the air, we can feel as we read the Letters of Junius, which appeared as early as 1769-71. But the pressure of taxation was not so great and the feudal burdens had almost disappeared. Whilst industrialism and commerce grew more rapidly and made a larger proportion of the new classes contented or at least comfortable. English sentimentalism therefore remained in its inherently unpractical state and showed no more vigorous desire for a state of nature than we can see in such poems as Goldsmith's Deserted Village till after the Revolution in France had broken out. Then Godwin in his Political Justice practically advocated anarchy guided by debate; and Tom Paine urged the French view of government in his Rights of Man. But these were solitary voices in England and were little to be feared in the violent reaction of the last decade of the century.

## Section 3.

1. Revolutionism remained a matter of emotion in England and found practical shape only in the spheres of faith and philanthropy. In literature it shed tears over the existing state of mankind and reached no farther back towards the state of nature than early historic times. Sentimentality and romanticism were two of its best safety-valves and became two of the most powerful allies of Tory reaction. They mingled often in the same book especially if it was fiction, and most of the stories of the last quarter of last century both stimulate tears and satisfy the love of an heroic past. Macpherson and Chatterton were workers in the same school and revealed the strength of the new emotional fashions. Ossian and the Rowley poems tried to take the eighteenth century mind back to a forgotten past, in the one case to the times of Celtic dominion over the islands, in the other to the Saxon times preceding the Norman conquest, and thus to satisfy its craving for a civilisation and manners different from its own though in their origin the same.

2. The new historical research was only another phase of the same romanticism. Men's minds, dissatisfied with their immediate surroundings, turned with eagerness to

other ages and countries. There had been little of the historical spirit since Elizabethan times; there had been some antiquarianism in the first half of the seventeenth century, evidently the after-harvest of Elizabeth's reign; but the rest of the century was too much engaged with its own struggle to attend to other times; it was only the contemporary history of their own land that interested Englishmen up till the beginning of the era. Oxford had begun to study modern history. But it is Hume that, about the middle of the century, shows the revival of historical research; it must have been a strong current of contemporary feeling that diverted him from his more congenial pursuit—the philosophical analysis of human nature and civilisation; for his History of England, commencing in 1754 with the reigns of James the First and Charles the First and in later volumes getting back to Julius Cæsar, shows no new historical talent and no great taste for the work. Smollett and Goldsmith were drawn similarly from their favourite literary work to history. The period is filled with second and third rate historians who show rather the passion of readers for knowledge of the past than any new capacity for research or for illuminating forgotten times. In Gibbon the dramatic and critical method of eighteenth century history culminated; it could not well produce anything more characteristic or striking than the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. And the succeeding period had to find a new method, that which is based on genuine sympathy with the past and on attempts to find its real spirit instead of reflections of modern times. Biography and research into antiquities were marked by the same defects as history during last century; they made no effort to find the spirit of the facts. The single exception to this is Boswell's Life of Johnson; and the reason for its extraordinary merit is that it is an anticipation of modern reporting and interviewing combined and applied to one subject through a series of years; it is biographical photography or realism, and it is an evidence of the new passion for minute personal knowledge of striking or famous literary characters, and of the wide audience that literature now had.

3. But one of the most promising methods of the new era in the realm of historical fact was the application of

philosophical thought to it. Bolingbroke, just before the middle of the century, had during his residence in France caught some of the new French treatment of the past and had written his pamphlet On the Study of History. But it was Hume that in the political section of his Essays (1742) revealed to England how much could be made out of history studied in its special phases. Montesquieu made an elaborate application of philosophical thought to the study of history in his Esprit des Lois (1748). And a whole new section of semi-philosophical, semi-historical literature sprang into existence in England in the latter half of last century. It dealt especially with the constitutional, economical and social phases of English history and the laws that underlie them. De Lolme, Blackstone, Tytler, and others took the legal and constitutional phases, Ferguson, Burke, Godwin, and Bentham the social as well as constitutional and economical; and a completely new science sprang into existence, professing to base itself upon the study of history; political economy, though at first somewhat theroretical and a priori in method, showed able manipulation of the facts of history in the hands of Adam Smith and Malthus. Both history and the philosophy of history promised new types of literature and indicated the genuine interest of the new reading public in the past of man and the laws that moulded it.

4. Nor was it merely in the man of the English nation; as the period went on, research and philosophy became more cosmopolitan; they grew interested in man as man; and the origins of his various faculties formed the frequent subject of investigation in the last quarter of the century. Lords Kames and Monboddo discussed prehistoric questions of man's existence, and so did many of the geologists; Harris and Horne Tooke tried to get at some principle as to the origin and growth of language, and most of the writers on aesthetics and rhetoric attempted like Burke to explain the sources of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful.

5. The same growing cosmopolitanism led Englishmen to make adventurous voyages and journeys into distant seas and lands as in the Elizabethan era, and to publish the results of their adventures. The English navy was reviving

the glories of the sixteenth century, and the merchant sailors were extending English commerce into every sea. Voyages of investigation became again as common for ships commissioned by the government as in the era of the Spanish Armada. The voyages of Anson, Cook, Byron, and Vancouver show how much England was interested in unknown lands and seas and in savage man ; the published accounts of them became the most popular of books. And so did books like Bruce's Travels (1790), in spite of the belief that the more striking features of them were fiction. Nay, fiction that gave accounts of imaginary peoples came again into fashion, as we can see by the popularity of books like The Adventures of Peter Wilkins. Books on civilised countries were as popular ; the reading public became deeply interested in such travels as those of Arthur Young through France between 1787 and 1789.

6. But it was perhaps the East that awakened most curiosity on the part of Englishmen during the period. The great romance of the conquest of India was proceeding, and everything that could be told or imagined about it was of interest. Yet there was less literature on the subject than might have been expected. It was more the topic of conversation and discussion as in the great debates during the trial of Warren Hastings ; the immediacy and greatness of the events in the career of Clive and other Englishmen in the East rather excited the imagination than produced books communicating knowledge of it. The poetry and fiction are tinged with the romance of the history that was making before the eyes of England.

7. The period that followed experienced more fully in its literature the effect of this marvellous expansion of the empire and of knowledge. It takes a generation to digest the results of new research or discovery or conquest, before they become the nutriment of imaginative books; they have to become the easy possession of all cultivated circles before they touch the creative mind and grow to be sources of inspiration. The historical products and harvests of one age fertilises the soil of the next. It is only towards the close of this period that we begin to see the influence of the new spirit of adventure and conquest and the new growth of the English world upon literature proper.

## Section 4.

**1.** It was the same with the expansion of science. That of the first half of the eighteenth century told most on the literature of the second half. The astronomical investigations of Newton, Flamsteed, Halley, and Bradley had already begun to tell on the imagination of literary men by the time that Pope's Essay on Man was written (1734); for there we have the system of the universe introduced as the background of human existence. But it is after this that the poets show the deepest consciousness of the imaginative significance of the infinity of systems above and beyond the earth. The stars of night form one of the commonplaces of Ossianic rhetoric. Blake and Chatterton, Cowper and Burns reveal a growing sense of the spiritual beauty of the phenomena of night. It is not however till the beginning of our own century that this enters with power into poetry. Wordsworth and Shelley at last make it the very heart of poetic feeling.

**2.** The scientific advance that told most on the literature of the early period was that made in natural history. The work of Linnaeus and Buffon had drawn the attention of even the average reader to the wonders of the plant and animal world, and awakened a sense of the beauty that had remained so long unseen. Before the century closed both poets and prose writers were keenly observing or sympathising with the non-human world around them and enlisting the interest of the average reader. Gilbert White devoted his long life to the study of the utility and beauty of the nature of his native village and district; rock and soil, tree and flower, bird and insect, all claimed his attention as their historian; and though his Natural History of Selborne is in the form of letters, it was manifestly intended for a wider public than his correspondents. Already the gentle companionship with nature that rises to its finest expression in the poetry of Cowper had come into English literature, a something far more imaginative and humane than the passion for classification that marks the scarabæist. White's correspondents, Pennant and Barrington, though amateurs, made the pursuit more of a

business and published a number of books on the natural history of various districts. By the last quarter of the century the interest in the results of the natural sciences was so widely diffused that it affected the imagination of the poets. Blake in poems like that on the tiger, and Burns in those like his Address to the Mouse and Address to the Daisy, have not reached the Wordsworthian insight that almost combines the philosophy and worship of nature ; but they are stirred to the depths of their hearts by beauty of form and pathos of life in the common things around them —an absolutely new phenomenon in literature. Even Sterne had to start his factory of public tears and weep for his readers over a dead donkey. The deeper and more philosophical study of plant and animal life that has resulted in biology and embryology was too young by the close of the century to influence poetry ; yet the speculations that connect themselves with the name of Lamarck had stirred thinkers like Monboddo to discuss the origin of man in prose, and imaginative men like Erasmus Darwin to attempt theories of nature in the form of didactic poems.

3. The sciences that were thought of as more practical by the average reader impressed him most during this period, and gave imagery, suggestion, and inspiration to the literature. The discoveries of geology and medicine, of physics and chemistry seemed to open up new worlds for the energy of man. New coal-fields and new mines and beds of valuable metals or stones or clay were more impressive for the common reader than Hutton's or Playfair's or Werner's or Laplace's speculations on the genesis and history of rocks and worlds, though these latter came also to affect the poetic imagination of the close of the century. The utility of Jenner's vaccination (1796) made itself immediately apparent to the average reader; but it was long before the work of Gregory or the Hunters or Bichat could fine its way into the literature that appealed to him. He could appreciate with the imagination the revolution that the steam engine of Watt, the spinning-jenny of Arkwright, the balloon of Montgolfier might work in his occupancy of the earth, and these supplied almost immediate literary illustration and figure; but the investigations of

Coulomb or Boscovich or the Bernouillis or Leslie took a generation before they could be made literary medium. Chemistry and engineering impressed him most immediately; for the new colours and the new canals and bridges appealed to his most practised sense, sight; but the more speculative labours of Black and Smeaton, Carnot and Lavoisier were "caviare to the general" till they were put into popular or practical shape. The first type of new knowledge to become literary material is the pseudo-scientific; the would-be sciences of Lavater and Mesmer, phrenology and animal magnetism touched the imagination of the reading public and crept into literature atmost at once.

4. The latter half of the period had indeed all the characteristics of a great scientific time; long-stretching vistas were opened up into the future of man by the new discoveries and triumphs of scientific thought, and a strongly optimistic tone appeared in literature again; Blake and Burns, Priestley and Godwin were but the salient instances of a wide-spread movement in England towards idealising the possibilities of human nature; whilst in France revolution, as generally, based itself upon an exaggerated optimism as to what could be done if only men threw off the burdens of the present. And it is what science is doing that stirs the imagination to such idealising flights. And at the same time it gives a materialistic tinge to more advancing thought; scientific thinkers dealing as they do with matter and its properties and seeing how much these explain in the constitution and history of man and in existence generally, come to have fixed in their minds the feeling that they can explain all and that all attempts at knowledge outside of the methods of science are futile.

5. The philosophy of the period, therefore, settles itself into the acceptance of this as the fundamental attitude of all speculation and research or into the struggle against it; Hume at the very beginning of the movement struck on its final issue and showed that it must land in universal scepticism; yet it continued to stir writers like Hartley and Priestley and Erasmus Darwin to find new materialistic theories of man and the universe. On its practical side

philosophy felt the advance of science in a growing utilitarianism; so full of utilities had scientific thought shown itself, that the general principle of utility was applied to explain the various ethical and social phenomena of human existence; and before the close of the century Bentham had taken up Hutcheson's phrase "The greatest happiness of the greatest number" and illuminated the spheres of government, legislation, and the ethics of criminality by the application of it. Paley had to introduce the new principle supplied by science even into theology; we can see how deeply practical and especially mechanical science had impressed the age when we reflect that his famous simile by which he explained the relation of God to the universe was taken from it. On the other side we have the Scotch school—Reid and Dugald Stewart—leading the struggle in philosophy against the principle that scientific advance had applied; though even in the Scotch chairs of philosophy we find men like Adam Smith moulding their speculations under the influence of the new utilitarian movement; his Moral Sentiments shows tendencies to analyse morality back into utilities; whilst his Wealth of Nations was a direct outcome of the practical applications of science; it is an attempt to discover laws in the material progress of nations.

6. Science had other influences on the literature of thought; it made thinkers eager to discover and face the facts of existence; and the result is a greater tendency in philosophy and other spheres to classify and analyse; the writers on metaphysics, ethics, and rhetoric attempt to get at law or rule from the side of reality, by observing and investigating instances minutely. And the same habit appears in the imaginative work. Poetry now prefers description of the world without to abstract treatment of its theme; Falconer and Crabbe, Rogers and Campbell reveal the matter-of-fact vein in some of the poets of the time. Better still, it learns to abandon the metaphysical though personified entities of the earlier half of the century and to approach nature face to face; there is almost scientific accuracy in the observation of natural phenomena shown in many of the poetic descriptions of them in the poems of Blake, Cowper, and Burns. Man himself is more accurately

observed and described by the new poets, in spite of their great superiority to the Queen Anne poets in enthusiasm and the expression of feeling. Even the diction gained from the progress of science; the need of careful definition of terms, in order to make sure any advance in scientific thought, influenced the popular critics towards the more exact use of words; there was even a movement in prose towards an almost monotonous periodic style; in Johnson and many of the writers that followed him, the phrases and sentences fall into serried ranks; we have only to compare the Letters of Junius, the product of anonymous journalism, with the papers of the Spectator, or the chapters of Gibbon's Decline with the pages of Clarendon's History of the Rebellion to see the enormous advance made in the regularity of prose style and correctness of prose diction. And this is partly due to the defining and classifying method introduced by science.

**7.** But the full effect of the advance in scientific thought and discovery and invention is not to be found in the latter half of last century; it rather belongs to the literature of our own.

## Section 5.

**1.** It is the same with the influence of the progress in art. Evidences of it are to be found in the prose and poetry of the earlier period; but they are scattered and unconnected; it came in like a flood during the later. In previous ages the only arts that had become English and given any impulse or mould to English literature were music and acting. Without them the Elizabethan poetry could never have taken the forms that distinguish it.

**2.** Without the development and love of the stage during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries we should never have had so great a dramatic age. It had become the national art spread by the church and the guilds widely throughout the provincial districts. The people had taken it up as the occupation of their leisure and all the popular talent entered into its cultivation with almost religious enthusiasm. For generations the writing and acting of

plays had stirred the best ambition of the artisans and rustics, and as soon as the art became secularised in the reign of Elizabeth, it monopolised the literary power that the new birth of learning and the new age of adventure had generated. Such a dramatic outburst could never occur again. For puritanism and the sectarian virulence of the civil war detached the tastes of the people from the art; it became a court parasite and ultimately a parasite of fashionable London society; and a dozen other literary forms developed rapidly and absorbed the imagination. The eighteenth century with its spread of fashionable circles to the baths and spas in the provinces began to give promise of the revival of the drama as more than a mere London amusement. And the latter half of the century again saw genius devote itself to the histrionic art. Garrick and Kemble and Mrs. Siddons would by their tragic power upon the stage have drawn the national imagination to the theatre again if any actors could have done so. But poetry and the novel, with their audiences that made those of the drama seem insignificant, were now absorbing most of it as far as it was concerned with the nobler passions; the serious section of the cultivated public, which would have appreciated and stimulated great thought and tragic power in the drama, avoided the theatre as immoral or at least frivolous; tragedy was, therefore, dead in England as a national art; these great actors had to be content with reviving Shakespeare's plays. It was comedy alone that could affect literature now. For it had had an unbroken, though somewhat fitful, life since the days of Elizabeth, and in our period it was rising again out of the impurity into which the Restoration had plunged it. Actors like Foote arose who devoted their whole talents to it. And literary men like Sheridan attached themselves to the stage and learned the subsidiary arts that could make the literary element of a comedy successful. Hence the permanent attraction of The School for Scandal and The Critic. And even talent, like Goldsmith's, that had no special training in the histrionic art, turned to comedy and made it a permanency in literature, as in his She Stoops to Conquer. But by far the most important influence of the drama on the literature of the period was the new mould it gave to the

novel. Hitherto fiction had been mere descriptive narrative, as in Defoe's; with Fielding, who had first written for the stage, it began to incorporate the dialogue of comedy. Smollet and Sterne developed this new dramatic element and during the nineteenth century it has become an essential of fiction; and the two arts act and react upon each other.

3. Music was almost as early in its moulding influence over English literature. It began with the ballads; and during the Elizabethan era it almost rivalled the stage in its power to attach the national imagination to literature. The sixteenth century was almost as much a lyrical age as a dramatic. And without music the genius of the country could never have found expression in the brief and melodious poem. The epic or long narrative would have been the only form for English poetry to take. Music fixed down upon it the habit of the melodious and varied stanza with its repeated harmonies and its refrain. The lyrical art as one that needs for its inspiration but a brief mood of strong feeling lived through the passion of the civil war. The age of common sense killed it and all other national forms of imaginative literature. The appearance of Handel and of opera and oratorio in England sufficed only to give a galvanic life to the lyric during the Queen Anne age; it took the form of the odes to music that became the fashion of the time. But as the century went on it came nearer and nearer to life. The success of native musicians like Arne encouraged the poets to write for them; and hence we have songs like the Rule Britannia of Thomson or Mallet. But the lyrical faculty did not grow into full secular life till nearer the beginning of the nineteenth century and then chiefly in the dialects of the people. The songs of Dibdin were less in the literary language than in the popular; and Burns is the salient instance of the resurrection of the lyric; he caught up the old Scotch tunes and the refrains of the old songs and fitted them to the new feelings. But most of the English poets of the time felt none of the impetus towards the lyric. It was felt rather in the religious instincts of the new audience; it was the hymn that drew all the lyrical talent of the people. And the marvellous

development of the musical art in Germany failed to influence the melody of either poetry or prose till the later section of the era. The larger harmonies of Glück and Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven began to affect English poets and prose writers only in the nineteenth century. Wordsworth and Coleridge reveal the influence only to a small extent in their Lyrical Ballads.

4. The arts that appeal to the eye had perhaps as much influence upon the English literature of the period as music; English painting and architecture especially made rapid strides and began to touch the average imagination. The term Gothic now lost its old sense of barbaric and the old cathedrals and churches and other buildings that had been neglected and despised for their Gothic style began to draw the eyes of critics and travellers again and impress the age with their beauty. If we compare the descriptions in the romances of some of the old abbeys and churches and castles built in this long forgotten and scorned architecture with the remarks of Addison on them in his letters descriptive of his Continental tour we can see what a revolution in taste was coming about. The new romance revelled in architectural description. Whilst sculpture in Flaxman and Canova mastered again the sphere of beauty. It brought back to the eye and imagination of the reading public the features of the noblest Greek art. And both poetry and romance began to indulge in glowing descriptions of the beautiful human body.

5. But it was painting that advanced most and touched the fancy of readers and writers most. This was the first great period of native English painting. And the literary and the picturesque arts became close allies. Painters and engravers began to find it as remunerative to illustrate books for the reading public as to sell the originals of their pictures. Indeed it was the greatest period of English engraving. Foreigners like Piranesi and Bartolozzi worked for the English public; and Woollett and Bewick and Sharpe made the reproduction of pictures for the new classes one of the fine arts. And the fertile imaginations of realists like Hogarth and caricaturists like Rowlandson and Gillray had to address themselves directly through engraving to the English mind

instead of through painting. There is no better proof of the advancing culture of the new classes and their influence on the artistic imagination than the pictures of these keen observers of human nature. They watch the humours of the crowd as well as those of high life. The whole range of English existence comes within the scope of their art. Rowlandson and Gillray are more political than social in their themes; but they draw their illustrations and parallels from all spheres. And when we inspect the engravings of Hogarth, we feel that he belonged to the same age as Fielding and Smollett and Sterne and that he worked for the same public. Nor is it merely similarity of cause that produces the likeness between the arts; interaction has as much to do with it. The novelists had not yet come to have their scenes and characters reproduced to the eye of the reader as in the latter half of the era. But Hogarth sometimes combined letter-press and picture. We can see that the novelists in their genre pictures have much aid in their delineation from the work of men like Hogarth and Rowlandson. And in the new romance of the last quarter of the century the development of portrait-painting by Reynolds and his contemporaries has led the writers to figure their characters more clearly; they devote more space to the vivid description of the physical features of their men and women. But it was the new growth of landscape painting by Gainsborough, Morland, and others that most affected literature. Never before in English story-telling had there been any attempt to describe with deliberation the nature and the scene in which the personages found themselves. It was not merely the new love of natural beauty that guided the hand of the novelist in picturesque description; the pictures of the landscapes are so definitely given and so frequently sandwiched into the narrative that it is clearly the painter's art that has suggested them; the reading public had come to look for vivid fancy in the description of scenery; and in the nineteenth century this feature became a mannerism in fiction. The poetic imagination was also moulded by the vigorous development of all types of painting, portrait, landscape, historical, and fanciful, after the establishment of the Royal Academy in 1768. In Gray's Elegy, in Goldsmith's Traveller and

Deserted Village, in Falconer's Shipwreck, Crabbe's Village, and Cowper's Task, in Rogers's Pleasures of Memory, and Campbell's Pleasures of Hope, it is the picturesque imagination that predominates; picture follows picture or portrait portrait. This graphic description of natural scenes had appeared in English poetry before; but in Denham's Cooper's Hill it is more topographical, and in Pope's Windsor Forest it is marred by personifications and other unrealities. Thomson's Seasons is the first anticipation of the true poetic use of it. And in the poetry of the latter half of the eighteenth century it monopolises the poetic imagination. Ossian's poems show their modern character in being a succession of pictures that take their clearness and definiteness from the rapid development of the art of painting in the England of the period. The eye that observed the halls of Balclutha had studied the landscapes of Wilson and Gainsborough, if not those of the French and Italian schools of landscape painters. The poets now painted with the full consciousness of the true proportion and perspective of pictures and of the true harmony of colour.

6. Nay, the artists of last century offered freely their aid to the literary imagination. They set themselves with full enthusiasm to realise the scenes that had become famous in the English drama. Some of the most imaginative painters of the time joined in the work of illuminating Shakespeare; Fuseli and Opie contributed to Boydell's Shakespeare's Gallery (begun in 1786) some famous representations of the plays, the former, for example, his Hamlet and the ghost, Lear and Cordelia, Titania and Bottom, and the latter his Troilus, Cressida and Pandarus; and Smirke contributed some of his best work in such illustrations as Katherine and Petruchio, and Dogberry and Verges. It came to be quite the fashion for the best painters and even the sculptors like Flaxman to illustrate the poets and prose imaginative writers. Flaxman's designs for Homer, Aeschylus, and Dante showed what sculpture, inspired by the relics of Greek art just unearthed at Pompeii, could do for the reading public in training their minds to vivid realisation of beautiful form and pure outline. Hogarth had worked in his youth at the illustration of books, as in

his designs for Hudibras. But it was in the latter half of last century that this alliance between art and literature was made. Stothard even illustrated the periodicals as, for example, the Town and Country Magazine, and The Novelist's Magazine. Richardson's and Smollett's novels, the collection of poetry in Bell's Poets, Ossian, Robinson Crusoe, and the Pilgrim's Progress all drew new popularity from his pencil. The choice of books for his work of designing shows very clearly what public he addressed; it was the new middle class with its old puritanism and its new sentimentalism and romance. Amongst foreign books the favourites for illustrators were Don Quixote, The Arabian Nights, and Rabelais. But it was Shakespeare, Bell's British Poets, and The British Theatre, that employed the best artistic talent of the last quarter of the century. Bewick with his new style of wood engraving confined himself chiefly to the illustration of natural history. And Blake stands apart as an illustrator of books. It was the taste of the age and the great expansion of the reading public that drew out his twin talents — designing and writing. But it was largely his own striking individuality that dictated his choice of subjects during his later career. The new classes amongst whom he was brought up and for whom he worked led him to Biblical and religious subjects like the book of Job, Young's Night Thoughts, and Blair's Grave; it was his own tastes that led him to design six plates for Mary Wollstonecraft's Tales for Children, to illustrate Dante's Inferno, and to write and illustrate the mystical poems in his various prophetic books. His Songs of Innocence and of Experience and his illustrations of Chaucer are due partly to the primitive type of his own character and partly to the return of his age to older and more primitive forms of feeling.

7. We need not wonder at the growth of picturesqueness in the English literature of the period, when there was so much done directly by artists for the alliance of the literary and the artistic imagination. The books that had been household words for generations throughout the middle classes and the new books that fitted the new phases of feeling of these classes were those that were most and best

illustrated. It was the new reading public that could pay by its numbers and released art as well as literature from the more galling yoke of personal patronage. There were few well-to-do English households now that had not a finely illustrated copy of some English classic. And thus was trained not merely the young artistic talent of the country, but the young literary talent; it learned to imagine more vividly and definitely the historical scenes and characters it conjured up and to "body forth the forms of things unknown," "turn them to shapes", and

> "give to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name."

The natural consequence was greater picturesqueness in literature and especially in fiction and poetry.

## Section 6.

1. An equally striking effect upon the prose of the period was produced by an art more nearly allied to nature than the literary. English political oratory rose to its greatest height during this period and moulded other kinds of prose as it never did before or again. For special conditions attached to it. The life given to parliamentary institutions by the revolution of 1688 reached its first vigour of youth in the latter half of last century. Party government had at last developed the House of Commons into a national arena, where the best leaders and orators each party could find were pitted against each other. The revolutionism of the age and the reaction against it gave them the heated atmosphere and the passion that make an art great. Even though the elections were still anything but a real test of national sentiment, the debates in the Commons revealed a consciousness of a listening nation. There is a dignity of manner and diction that belongs to the political oratory of no other period. For the right of public meeting was won late in the century and the habit of making great oratorical efforts before the electors had not yet been fostered by the development of journalism and verbatim reporting into a fixed feature of English civilisation. Thus the lower House was the one arena for the oratorical talent of the secular kind. And

Chatham, Pitt, Burke, Fox, Sheridan, the greatest names in the history of English political eloquence, were gathered together in it during the last quarter of last century. They had splendid themes in the American and French revolutions and in the subsidiary movements that clustered round these and the new philanthropy. They had all the enthusiasm of the new time. And they had all the illustrative material that the expansion of the empire and of literature supplied.

**2.** It is not strange, then, that the oratory should react upon literature. And it had exceptional circumstances for such reaction. During the greater part of the period there could be no verbatim reporting of the speeches in parliament and the accounts of them published had for a time to seem fictitious; imaginary names were given to the speakers and even the houses were spoken of in a veiled way. The reporters sent in by the publishers had, therefore, to be men of considerable literary power. And their training in the manipulation, if not transformation, of the speeches they heard had no mean influence upon the prose style of the time. Dr. Johnson was long engaged upon this service to the public; and there is little doubt that the long balanced swing of the Johnsonian period was due to the necessity of polishing into the oratorical form the rough drafts that his or other men's memory bore out of the House. He had already acquired the tendency to rhetoric from Pope and the Queen Anne age. But he developed the regularity of form into the long oratorical period. When he came to write for the public in Rasselas and the Rambler, he was unable to abandon the habit he had thus learned from his professional occupation. His last book, The Lives of the Poets, though removed farthest by time from this influence, and though freer in style than anything of his but his sayings reported by Boswell, has still much of the old habit; he falls into it as soon as the escape from details and facts allows him to pass into an elaborate judgment or moralisation.

**3.** And his long dictatorship of the London literary world helped to make it almost a fixed habit of the prose of the period. It matters not to what literary type we turn,

there we find the elaborate sentence of balanced clauses and phrases. In Junius we see the public epistolary style take the type of brief debating speeches addressed to a small and educated assembly. History has the same kind of audience to address, if we are to judge by Gibbon's great work; for it is marked by its long and intricate periodic style and condensed rhetoric. Philosophy has the same oratorical tinge, as we can see in the books of Campbell, Beattie, and Burke. Even Goldsmith in his essays, and Horace Walpole and Godwin in their novels occasionally fall into the declamatory style. The very poetry has something of it. Goldsmith and Cowper and Rogers have at times in their poems the periodic or pendulum-like swing of the prose.

4. Nor was the oratory that thus moulded the literature of the time of a popular kind, like much that is political in our own century. It had ever in view the great classical orators, Demosthenes and Cicero; and indulged often in a long classical quotation, and constantly in highly Latinised diction. Although in sentiment it might address the nation, it kept before it as its ideal of form an address to a small, aristocratic, and highly educated audience. It assumed great dignity of tone even when it was stabbing to the heart or torturing by keen irony or personal attack. It had none of the didacticism or direct appeal to the emotions that pulpit eloquence had adopted. Through the oratory of the sermon rhetoric had already entered into English prose during all periods. But it was essentially different from that which came from the House of Commons. It was more given to subtlety of thought and quaint illustration and more guided by the desire to teach. Even forensic eloquence was different; it was more eager to persuade either the subtle or scholarly mind of a judge or the loose-jointed thinking powers of a jury. The oratory of the parliamentary rostrum was rather marked by a passion to state situations clearly and to bring the best historical light to bear on them than to persuade or convert. Arguments for a political creed, winged by fervid appeal to the past or to the broad sense of humanity, filled the speeches of Burke and Chatham and Fox.

5. And it was this type of oratory that so long affected written prose during the latter half of last century. There were many indications of the revolt of prose from the Latinised rhetoric that had fixed its yoke upon it almost from the age of Chaucer; and this regularity and balance of construction that the new oratory gave it was one of its first aids towards a better and more natural style. But the two literary phenomena that were to emancipate it completely from the yoke of oratory were the growth of the novel and the return of poetry to nature. Fiction, in having to address the new reading public, had to draw from the more Saxon fountains of English that persisted in the language of the Authorised Version and the Pilgrim's Progress and in the language of conversation, and by its gradual incorporation of the didactic purposes of prose soon spread its influence widely over all other departments of writing. Poetry in throwing off the yoke of London society and appealing to the native instincts of the English people had to find a more natural type of expression than had been handed down from the age of Queen Anne; the popular ballads and songs suggested the true sources of diction; and it rejected the Latinised phraseology and the conventional forms that so long had cramped it; the simple language of the everyday life of the people was now preferred and that was largely tinged with the archaisms of the folk literature, the Bible, and the ballads. But this movement did not affect the diction of prose much till almost the beginning of the nineteenth century.

## Section 7.

1. And it is not surprising that oratory held such an absolute sway over written prose during our period. For it was a period of great individualities, all over the civilised world, and these moved in the world of politics, especially in England. It is seldom that four such powerful characters as Chatham, Pitt, Burke, and Fox have been gathered together into one generation of the House of Commons. Whilst Johnson and Gibbon, two other striking individualities, one by his occupation as reporter of the speeches and the other by his interest and ultimate appearance in the

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House, assumed oratorical prose as the most natural expression of their thoughts. Such influences could not fail to keep style enslaved to oratory. And as we read the Letters of Junius we feel that they are addressed to the nation through the Commons.

**2.** This latter part of the eighteenth century indeed was marked like the Elizabethan era by the number of powerful individualities that appeared. What century could show such a record of greatness? Frederick the Great, Catherine of Russia, Napoleon, Wellington, Nelson, Washington, Mirabeau, have each of them a character that would have made any age notable. It was the revolutionism of the time that called them out and gave them missions that made them famous. Europe seethed with the rising tempest; and the new ideas naturally singled out exceptional force of character or will or mind either as their representatives or as reactionaries against them. The whole of civilisation was alive with threatening change and exceptional power was needed to give it issue and definite form. Hence from all spheres came wills and characters that could mould and impress; and the very atmosphere of passion that surrounded them made them stronger in individuality. But it is the misfortune of such a time that politics and war draw off its genius from the arts and literature, though these alone could give it a form that would live as a personal influence over all ages. History alone gives us any record of their greatness, and but for it they would become a name. And apart from the revolutionism that produced them or called them forth, they cannot be said to have much more than a negative influence on the literature of the age. Their success stirs the talent of each nation to political and warlike ambition and only those, who are incapacitated for such public pursuits by weakness of health or timidity of disposition, prefer the gentler arts. Perhaps their careers quicken the blood in the veins of writers and stir them to seek heroic ages for their themes. Ossian and Chatterton's poems and the romances of the last quarter of the century are, perhaps, partly the outcome of such a stimulus. So too perhaps is the great development of historical literature that marks the period. Men who saw great history making

before their very eyes became anxious to study the great past. Great individualities and great events dwarf literature and throw literary pursuits into shadow. It is when they have passed that the imagination of the solitary thinker and writer begins to know their fertilising influence. It is the first half of the nineteenth century that shows in literature the effect of the striking characters and occurrences of the eighteenth. Only in oratory and the prose that is moulded by it do we see a great impulse communicated by the immediate presence of surpassing individuality in the service of the state.

3. The English House of Commons and its orators felt that they were dealing with great issues when they were deciding on the action of the nation in India, in America, on the Continent. India did not trouble them much; and yet the growth of an Eastern empire to govern became almost a romance before the close of the century and influenced the imagination of the reading public. Eastern ideas of luxury crept into the new literature of fiction and gave a sensuous atmosphere to it. Even the forensic oratory was touched into enthusiasm when it handled cases like that of Warren Hastings. The American revolution and its results excited the legislature only for a few years and then vanished for a time and the new continent reappeared only in the debates prompted by the anti-slavery agitation.

## Section 8.

1. It was France that was the great protagonist in the struggles of English statesmanship and oratory, as it had been for a century or more. Never long was it out of the minds of the legislature, especially during the last decade of the century. Some of the finest speeches had the Revolution or the Napoleonic wars as their theme. And all the literature that came within the influence of oratory (history, journalism, pamphleteering, political philosophy,) was bent in this direction. On the one side we have as permanent results the Reflections on the French Revolution by Burke and the smart burlesques and lyrics of Canning in The Anti-Jacobin. On the other we have the Political

Justice of Godwin, the Rights of Women of Mary Wollstonecraft, the political lyrics of Burns, and the writings of Jeremy Bentham. The enormous pamphlet and journalistic literature of the time has vanished; only the caricatures of Gillray and Rowlandson show how deeply English public opinion was stirred by events in France.

**2.** But through the whole period French thought and literature had influenced English and that more directly and less in the reactionary way than the Revolution affected them. Hume and Adam Smith and Gibbon owed much of their clearness of style to their knowledge of French and many of the cues and starting-points of their thought to their sojourn on the Continent and their study of French authors. Helvetius and Voltaire strengthened the destructive and sceptical ideas in the mind of David Hume. Montesquieu with his Esprit des Lois and Turgot and the physiocrats suggested many of the points of view of The Wealth of Nations. Rousseau and the Encyclopedists are to some extent responsible for the tone of antagonism to Christianity and religion in general apparent in The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. And it is the sneers of Voltaire that are reproduced in such books and pamphlets as Tom Paine's Age of Reason. Voltaire and Diderot, Condorcet and Volney had taken their first lessons from the English deists of the Queen Anne period; but they gave back to England sharper and more keenly polished the weapons they had drawn from her. Reaction from them also produced a considerable literature, including Paley's Evidences of Christianity. And the same writers that showed the emotional effect of the new revolution revealed like Cowper this reactionary tendency. Rousseau and St. Pierre had an undoubted influence on the romantic and sentimental movements in England, though they did not originate them. The salons of Paris and the system of journals and letter-writing that rayed from them had much to do with the evolution of the English epistolary and conversational style. The letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Horace Walpole, the Diary of Madame D'Arblay, and the conversations introduced into the fiction of the time owe much to French example; and coteries,

like the Blue-stocking Club formed by Mrs. Montagu, originated in the customs of French society. Madame du Deffand, Madame D'Epinay, Mademoiselle L'Espinasse, Madame Recamier, and other Parisian ladies gave the intellectual and emotional cue to English ladies of literary and learned proclivities. And the style of English prose began to show again the influence of the study of French. Beckford wrote his Vathek in that language and then translated it into English. Mary Wollstonecraft and Godwin and Bentham reveal in the lucidity and definiteness of their style a close study of it. Even as early as Goldsmith imaginative prose had benefitted by it in clearness of expression and brevity of sentences. Whilst Sheridan in his dramas and epigrams, if not in his speeches too, reveals the influence of Beaumarchais and the French comedians and epigrammatists.

3. And the thought of England had profited as much from French research. In science and philosophy France showed extraordinary activity during this period; her whole spirit seemed moved by the latent revolutionism to enterprise in the world of thought; no sphere seemed too difficult to traverse in search of new fact, new cause, or new theory. If we select only the names that have European fame, the list is striking compared with that of any other period or country. Buffon and Cuvier, Lamarck and Bichat, the Bernouillis and Coulomb, Lagrange and Legendre, Lavoisier and Carnot, D'Alembert and Laplace, Voltaire and Rousseau, Condillac and Diderot and Condorcet explored every region of human knowledge and mapped them out or added to them. It was the preparation for the Revolution and not the Revolution itself that drew this extraordinary array of power into the world of research and speculation. For in the period after the Revolution the names of French scientists and thinkers are far fewer and less known; war and the state then absorbed the ambition and talent of the country. The passion and struggle for half a century before the great cataclysm were within the human spirit.

3. Hence the great influence of France of last century upon the thought of England. Few departments of English science and philosophy but profited by the glowing life of

contemporary French thought. Some of their most eminent representatives crossed the Channel in order to draw inspiration by direct intercourse. Others studied the results with ardour. Whilst all English thought, whether advancing or retrogressive, profited by the atmosphere of French thought. We can see how far it penetrated when we find it in the pietism of Cowper, the chopped-up Homerism of Ossian, the early fervours of Southey, and the localised inspiration of Burns. It was a subtle influence breathing through the soul of English literature more than a definite mould or model for it.

## Section 9.

1. All the rest of Europe put together had less effect upon the minds of English writers. The struggles of oppressed nationalities like Poland roused poetry to fitful sympathy or pity as in Cowper and Campbell. The enthusiasm of patriots like Paoli gave momentary fervour to certain literary circles through such books as Boswell's concerning the Corsican general. The moral gaucheries and intellectual advancement and sympathies of Catherine of Russia gave an occasional romantic thought or illustration to English imagination. Frederick's victories and the expulsion of the Jesuits from Portugal and Spain might have stimulated history to philosophical thought. But it was France that was the centre of European stimulus.

2. From other countries it was their old literature and art and thought that still awakened echoes in England. Mickle translated the Lusiad of Camoens, feeling doubtless that the epic of the great past of Portugese enterprise in the East would interest England with her growing Indian empire. It was the Spain of the Elizabethan era that still interested Englishmen; and Smollett and others had to translate again for the eighteenth century her ever-green Don Quixote; whilst her old picaresque novels, chiefly, it is to be said, through the French imitation Gil Blas, moulded English fiction in the hands of Fielding and Smollett; Tom Jones and Jonathan Wild, Roderick Random and Ferdinand Count Fathom have all the meandering art and life-likeness of Lazarillo de Tormes and the hero of Le Sage's book.

So it was the great past of Italy that gave new stimulus; the discovery of Pompeii in 1750 made ancient Rome a perennial source of living interest to English travel and thought; the specimens of Greek art found in the excavations gave new birth to sculpture and architecture and even painting. And English painters began to visit Italy and study her great collections of pictures as the true school of art. Contemporary Italy influenced England chiefly through science and the drama. Galvani and Volta gave new developments to electricity and two new words to the English language. Metastasio, Goldoni, and Alfieri, chiefly through France, had some influence on English comedy in the hands of Goldsmith and Sheridan. But it was the opera through which Italy most effected the English stage. Musical operettas and farces became the order of the day in London and gave a distinct form for a time to English drama.

3. But the country that was now to approach France in influence upon England was Germany. Before the close of last century it began to be evident that this Teutonic people was about to mould certain sections of English thought and art. Her great era of literature, philosophy, and music had begun by the middle of the century. Bodmer and Gottsched had entered on their duel concerning classical and romantic literature and Klopstock had published his Messiah. Bach and Handel had accomplished their greatest triumphs in music. Winckelmann and Lessing had studied classical art and tried to find its true spirit. And Kant had already begun to reflect upon Hume's scepticism and think out his new theory of the world and human knowledge. But the great period of German literature and music and philosophy covers rather the last quarter of last century and the first quarter of this, and their influence on English literature belongs rather to the nineteenth century.

4. Yet we have the ballads of Bürger and the early plays of Goethe affecting the mind of Scott so much that he publishes translations from them. But it was the unwholesome sentimentalism of Goethe's Werther and Kotzebue's plays that most attracted the new English audience. Translations of the latter were frequent and were put upon

the stage even by critics and wits like Sheridan. Their indulgence in tears and morbid sentiment confirmed the taste for weak self-pity and futile self-analysis that had already appeared in English literature.

5. The influence of German music was far sounder. Handel had acclimatised it in England, and Glück, Haydn, and Mozart had shown how its greatest effects might be secularised. And in reforming the taste for grand concerted music, they confirmed the popular English taste for song and hymn. There was a complete revival of the lyric in English literature in the last quarter of the century. The new naval glories of England drew Dibdin into songs of the sea. Blake and Cowper, though diverted by their circumstances into other literary forms, were largely lyrical in their genius; hence they appear at their best in the brief poem that expresses a single emotion and has a refrain, as, for example, Blake in his Cradle Song and Cowper in his lyric To Mary. Some of the most popular English songs, like the British Grenadiers, The Friar of Orders Gray, The Miller of Dee, and The Lass of Richmond Hill, belong to this period. And few of the poets but attempted the lyrical vein. Even Wordsworth and Coleridge in spite of their strongly metaphysical bent were drawn in the last decade of the century into the lyrical and ballad form. Their joint volume of Lyrical Ballads issued in 1798 is an evidence of the great lyrical movement that was sweeping through English poetry; it reveals their philosophical leanings and yet attempts to adapt itself to the fashion of song. But it was in Scotland that the influence of music upon literature was most apparent. John Logan's Braes of Yarrow and Jane Elliott's Lament for Flodden show the pathos that Scottish song was capable of; and Mickle's Sailor's Wife shows its humorous and familiar side. It is a mistake to think that Burns was a marvellous lyrical genius that sprang up in the midst of unlyrical surroundings. He only took the songs of the people and added to the stanzas or revised them. His name has overshadowed and absorbed the reputation of a hundred Scottish song-writers of last century; and though he surpasses all of them in variety of power and in uniform beauty and vigour of

melody, individual songs of theirs like the two first mentioned and Lady Lindsay's Auld Robin Gray and Lady Nairn's Land of the Leal equal his best in pathos of appeal to the national or to the human heart.

6. The extraordinary development of hymn-writing is due as much to the evangelical and other religious movements as to the influence of music. But we cannot well account for the reappearance of the secular lyric in all its old Elizabethan beauty and power except by the popular demand for melody such as Euglishmen could sing without instrumentation or organised choirs. The old love of the simple song was revived and confirmed by the power which German music began to obtain in oratorio and symphony and opera over the English public. Nothing shows the resurgence of the people so clearly as this influence of a newly Teutonised art, and this revival of the lyric. It reveals at the same time the return of literature to its primitive Teutonic sources and forms, to nature and an older and broader nationalism.

# CHAPTER III.

## Special Characteristics and Influences.

### period of fulfillment.

### 1800—1850.

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## Section 1.

1. The great period of Germanism in our literature is the second division of our era, 1800 to 1850. German criticism and philosophy, poetry and fiction, drama and music gave or confirmed new impulses or movements in the English world of letters.

2. To take music first, who can doubt that the wonderful development of musical genius in Germany had a close connection with the experimentation in melody by the English poetry of the period? It is one of the most striking features of the latter that so many metres and rhythms are attempted. Most ages of poetry had preferred some favourite form; as, for example, the Dryden and Pope age chose the heroic couplet and seldom departed from it. Even the Elizabethan age had its preference for blank verse and a stanza like the Spenserian. But during the first half of our century there is no predominance of any one metre or form; rhyme is as natural to the poets as blank verse, the heroic couplet as the long stanza, the sonnet as the lyric with refrain; and the desire for variety is shown in the continual experiments made by Coleridge, Southey, Tennyson, and Browning in new or foreign metres and forms,—anapaestic verse, hexameter, sapphic. Even the tuneless Byron experimented in his lyrics and Hebrew melodies and by no means confined himself to one metre in his longer poems. The poetic power of the age had attained such confidence in its harmony and melody that it could venture out with success in any metre or stanza.

3. It is almost the same with prose. There had been two or three typical styles in all previous ages, and no writer could depart far from them without losing command of his expression. Now we have continual variety and experiment in the prose books. The vigorous, abrupt Saxon of Cobbett, the regular, balanced paragraph, and rhetorical, Latinised sentence of Macaulay, the half-colloquial and half-archaic quaintness of Lamb, the prosaic, matter-of-fact style of Grote and Hallam, the passion-lit eccentricity of Carlyle, the solid and undistinctive though copious diction of Scott, and the imaginative brilliancy and polish of Landor seem almost as if they belonged each to a different age. Nay, the same writer develops and changes his style as he proceeds in his literary career, if not within the same year and work. Now he is Saxon, again he is Latinised; now he prefers the Johsonian, again he indulges in the short and irregular melody of more modern prose. There is a variety of rhythm and style that often makes it difficult to identify a passage. Only mannerists like Carlyle cling to the one style and intensify its singularity. Most other writers vary their style according to their theme and model. But whatever their method of expression, as a rule, the writer has now full command of its rhythm and is conscious of the beauty of melody in it. And this is undoubtedly the effect of the spread and development of musical taste under the tutorship of Germany.

4. There is, too, in some, as often in De Quincey and Landor, and occasionally in Lamb and Hazlitt, a large harmony in passages that seems to find its analogy only in the greater musical compositions of Beethoven, Schubert, or Mendelssohn. Can we doubt that, without such genius in music as Germany produced, there would have been less of the arts of melody and harmony in the English prose of the period?

5. The drama was still under the influence of the opera, which had been greatly developed both in Italy and Germany and had drawn to it the finest musical talent as well for execution as for composition; so important had this section of the drama become in England, that a theatre especially for it, the English Opera House, was opened in

1816; great singers like Malibran and Catalani and Mario devoted themselves to it and spread its popularity, and English composers like Balfe set themselves to this combination of music and the drama. The day of Teutonic opera had not yet come; but Mozart's and Beethoven's were popular and helped to mould the public taste to more musical diction in the drama proper.

6. But the chief influence of the drama was negative. The ever-recurring lyric was thrown out, and the mongrel plays, half concert, half drama, that had been such favourites in the previous period began to disappear from the stage. Singers with dramatic power had now full scope in the opera and were drawn off from the drama proper. But German plays continued to affect it. The sentimentalism of Kotzebue moulded many of the plays that could fill a London theatre. Even in those of Sheridan Knowles and Douglas Jerrold there is some tinge of it, whilst in Bulwer Lytton's Lady of Lyons it is rampant. The laughter stirred by The Rovers, Canning's burlesque of these German and Germanised plays, gave only a temporary check to their popularity.

7. By far the most important influence of the German drama was the development of a new species in English literature, the purely literary drama. Coleridge was first attracted by the plays of Schiller, and translated Wallenstein and the Piccolomini; and inspired by these he and his friends started to write plays; he wrote Robespierre, and got his Osorio, an imitation of Schiller's Robbers, put upon the stage without permanent success; Southey began with his Wat Tyler, and Wordsworth with his Borderers. So Scott, stimulated by his translation of Goethe's Goetz von Berlichingen, wrote several brief tragedies and dramatic scenes as, for example, Auchendrane; but they were never acted and indeed were incapable of being acted. The stimulus was purely artificial so early in the period as the beginning of the century; none of these poets had essentially dramatic power.

8. The literary drama was to come later, after Goethe's greatest effort, Faust, had begun to be translated and to affect the English imagination. It was this striking product

of the German mind, unfitted as it was for the stage, that, along with the deeper study of Shakespeare's tragedies, drew the best English poets to the unhistrionic dramatic form. Byron reveals imitation of Goethe's drama in his Manfred and The Deformed Transformed, and all his plays were undoubtedly written under its inspiration. It was this, too, along with the tragedies of Aeschylus that turned so undramatic poets as Shelley and Mrs. Browning to the drama in the Prometheus Unbound and the Drama of Exile. Keats, Landor, Browning, Tennyson, Joanna Baillie, Hannah More, Croly, Wells, Clough, Horne, Kingsley, Darley, all attempted the literary dramatic form for many of their poems. And the reading drama or dramatic scene has come to be established as one of the most popular types of poetry in nineteenth century literature; it originated with Faust, but it has drifted far from its origin, drawing inspiration from varied sources. And it has its counterpart in prose in the dramatic dialogue and conversation, made so artistic by Landor and Helps. Nor was the influence of Goethe's Faust confined to the dramatic art and form. It greatly stirred the imagination of Carlyle, as we can see in Sartor Resartus. And De Quincey shows his study of it in his more imaginative essays and in his Opium-eater. The fiction of the supernatural benefited by it being deepened and made more philosophical in its treatment of the ever-attractive theme.

9. But it was Goethe's novel, Wilhelm Meister, that most affected English fiction. It gave birth to a new division of it, the philosophical, that, in the hands of Kingsley, Hawthorne, and George Eliot, attempted the most difficult problems of modern life and yet remained artistic. At first its dissertations and discussions led to such novels as Plumer Ward's Tremaine; but later in the period it inspired Bulwer Lytton to shallower and more rhetorical and yet more interesting efforts in fiction. Carlyle translated it amongst his earliest literary attempts. And he also helped the English literary public to appreciate the new era in German literature by his brilliant essay upon it and by his translations from its prominent fictionists, Musaeus, Tieck, Richter.

**10.** Jean Paul Richter tinged Carlyle's own style and diction deeply by the strange patchwork of humour, simile, and poetical philosophy, in which his novels were dressed. To Novalis the maximist and him is due the introduction of the sententious, almost oracular, aphoristic style that culminated in Emerson and still has its disciple in George Meredith. Carlyle developed the bizarre tendency he had acquired from Richter into a mannerism that made a Carlylean school of style impossible. There is almost none of it in his earlier essays and his Life of Schiller; and in Sartor Resartus there is more of Richter's humour and love of concentration, of striking poetry and thought and simile in strange epithet and compound. His later style became more conventional according to his own model than picturesque. Yet it infected nineteenth century English with a distinct Germanising tendency. The free creation of compounds was a habit of the oldest English that had been curtailed and almost lost by the many centuries of French influence. The study of German and the example of great imaginative writers like Carlyle have re-established it to the great advantage of our language. The older habit of more numerous adjectival epithets has revived in the same way, and the use of an active infinitive for the more usual passive dependent on a noun or adjective. A less advantageous tendency derived from German is the dislocation of the article or pronoun from its noun by a series of adjectives or epithets; it interferes greatly with the rhythm of phrases and the balance of sentences. Even melodious writers of prose like Lamb, writing early in the century, were infected with this epithetic habit. The chief service that the influence of German has done to English has been to recall it to its Teutonic origin. Without rejecting the French and Latin words and idioms that have been completely acclimatised in our language, English prose diction has become more conscious of the power of its Saxon elements, and in all its developments towards poetic power and the expression of pathos and the emotions has learned to go back to the simpler words that the Saxonism of the common people has retained for more than a thousand years and has saturated with national feeling.

**11.** It was the Germanism of the early part of our century, too, that sent us back to the treasures of our own literature. The previous period had begun this good work of retreat upon our footsteps. But Coleridge on his return from Germany introduced into England the more sympathetic and at the same time more scholarly study of Shakespeare and the Elizabethan writers. And Lamb and a host of less imaginative scholars and critics than he drew both readers and writers back to the greatness of the English literary past and supplied native fountains of inspiration. Scott had already been confirmed in his researches into folk-literature amongst the old legends and ballads of the Borders by the new ballads and narrative poems of Germany It made Englishmen proud of their own literature to find another nation studying every age of it with both poetic enthusiasm and minute scholarship. They had dealt with all but the greatest writers like Shakespeare and Milton and Spenser in a half-apologetic way, and even at times chimed in with French critics in their condemnation of the barbaric grandeur of these great poets. The new consciousness of the beauty of the Gothic in architecture and the Teutonic in literature grew into confidence in the old English poets and prose-writers as the best sources of inspiration. And the nineteenth century witnessed a great Anglicising movement in all kinds of composition, thanks largely to the influence of Germany and German scholarship.

**12.** German scholarship and criticism were recreating the past. Heyne and Adelung, Wolf and Voss had revolutionised the study of the classics from the side of both literature and language. Winckelmann and Lessing analysed the spirit of classical art. Schleiermacher and Neander were bringing the new critical methods to bear on the Bible and its history. And Heeren and Savigny, Niebuhr and Bunsen were illuminating various phases of past civilisation by means of them. The Schlegels and Grimms, Tieck and most of the imaginative writers studied Teutonic and especially English literature and legend and folk-lore with great enthusiasm and industry. Such activity in scholarship and criticism could not but spread to England in so vigorous a period as the first half of the nineteenth

century. And the new methods appeared not only in classical study but in the study of English literature. Coleridge and Hazlitt as sympathetic critics, Isaac Disraeli and Hone, Collier and Knight, as editors and collectors gave evidences of the new method and the new industry. Their application to history appeared in the work of Turner and Kemble, Hallam and Palgrave, Macaulay and Napier, Arnold and Milman, Thirlwall and Grote. These were historians of the new and German type who left no document or authority unexamined, no doubt or question ignored, before they would describe an event or a character, a scene or an episode.

13 But it was in philosophy that German influence became more apparent as the period advanced. There had been a native development of abstract thought all through the eighteenth century in England towards utilitarianism, and this was carried on under French stimulus by Bentham, the Mills, and George Henry Lewes. But with Coleridge's return from Germany there entered in a strong idealistic opposition to this. The great names of Kant and Hegel, Fichte and Schelling could not but give an impetus to English philosophy as soon as Germanism found a footing; and these were all idealists. Coleridge was the first to introduce the taste for highly abstract statements of the principles and formulæ of life and knowledge; and through his writings and lectures and monologues, the subjective and the objective and the ideal became common even in popular didactic prose. No great school of English idealistic philosophy yet arose. But we see the influence of Kant and even of Fichte in the thought of lecturers and writers like Hamilton and Mansel and a tinge of idealism appears occasionally in even popular prose-writers like Carlyle and De Quincey, Bulwer Lytton and Ruskin, Emerson and Hawthorne. Perhaps the most striking effect is to be found in poetry, which is by nature idealistic. Wordsworth and Coleridge reintroduced the philosophical point of view; and few poets of the nineteenth century are without that tinge of philosophy which distinguishes the Elizabethans. The imaginative and even the dramatic statement of the most abstract problems became a common feature of the poetry

of the early half of our century. The Queen Anne poetry had occasionally come across them with its didactic method ; but it had no conception of their power to suggest thought or sound the imaginative depths of human life ; it could not Shakespearianise them as Shelley and Browning and Tennyson were able to do. The Prometheus Unbound, Paracelsus, and In Memoriam, all products of the first half of our century, range through the most difficult problems of philosophy and are yet as far from the didactic spirit as Shakespeare from Pope ; they have around them an atmosphere of idealistic thought and suggestion that the Germanism introduced by Coleridge and Carlyle must have done much to create.

## Section 2.

**1.** Through France and French philosophy some of this idealism came from Germany into England. St. Hilaire, Royer Collard, Maine de Biran, Jouffroy, and Cousin stripped German idealism of its bristling technicalities and made its chief mental attitudes familiar and almost easy to popular readers ; in short they Gallicised Kant and Fichte. And though Coleridge brought the new view of life and knowledge direct from its source with all its Germanism upon it, English philosophy and popular thought during the earlier part of our century preferred to take it as clarified by French minds. Thus it was ready for use in popular literature, in sermon and essay, poem and novel, a generation before it could have filtered down through English philosophy direct from its home.

**2.** The attitude more natural to French philosophy is the positive that adheres to classification of facts and prefers a materialistic or utilitarian solution of problems. Comte claimed to be its supreme representative, if not its re-discoverer, in the nineteenth century. And from him and Bentham the English popularisers of utilitarianism drew much of their inspiration, James Mill, John Stuart Mill, George Henry Lewes, Bain, Buckle, and Grote. Though his classification of the sciences was by no means the final, it gave stimulus to the encyclopedism that marked

the whole period, whilst his view of history, as consisting of stages that close in the positive, which looks at all things in an unsupernatural, unmetaphysical way, led men like George Henry Lewes, Buckle, and Grote to suggestive revisions of the facts of the past. Not till the latter half of our century, not till Darwin and Spencer had revolutionised our view of the past by the theory of development, did the positive attitude to life have much effect upon imaginative literature. Without such a fertile and illuminative thought, its influence upon poets and artists could only be negative and chilling. Perhaps the chief imaginative influence of Comtism in the earlier part of the century was directly, by its lifeless, faithless version of the Catholic church, to encourage the Oxford religious reaction, and indirectly, by its confident and dogmatic negative to idealism and the treatment of the supernatural, to bring about that pathetic scepticism which takes such poetical beauty in Clough's poems and Tennyson's In Memoriam.

3. It was French science that, after the absorption of talent by the Napoleonic wars, grew apace and moulded English thought most. In biological and physiological investigation, physics, chemistry, astronomy, and geology France took one of the foremost places in Europe. And though Germany, especially in the second quarter of the period, made as great strides in scientific discovery as France, her scientific work did not so closely or so deeply affect English thought and literature. It was the practical tendency and lucid exposition of French science that appealed at once to the popular imagination, and brought illustration and simile into English poetry and suggestion of plot and incident into English fiction.

4. But pure literature was more affected by French history and criticism than by either philosophy or science. Into these the new spirit of the Revolution introduced such an emotional element as made them almost as interesting as fiction. From Chateaubriand to Michelet there was a long series of French writers who found in history the elements of romance and dealt with it as a succession of striking pictures; the great drama of the Revolution and the Napoleonic wars had been so impressive, so rapid, and

sensational in its acts and dénouements, that the historical imagination was touched into life by it and sought like romantic material in other periods and countries. The dramatic and picturesque style of French historians became the model of many of our historians. And Macaulay, Napier, Milman, Merivale, Prescott, Kinglake, Ticknor, Motley, and Bancroft bring out the romance of various periods with an imagination and style almost poetic. Even Carlyle, Germanised so deeply though he was, caught the dramatic fervour of history from the French and raised the new style to its highest romantic pitch in his French Revolution. The new philosophical treatment of history in France as a series of phenomena social, political, and economical, and represented especially by Guizot, De Tocqueville, and Comte, took as deep root in England, but later in the century. George Henry Lewes, Buckle, and Draper were only the founders of this new combination of history and philosophy in England which has been so fertile during the latter half of the century; and they drew their first inspiration from France.

5. Criticism also learned for the first time in France to be philosophical and picturesque. Villemain, Saintebeuve, Janin, and Scherer taught English critics that to use the lash was not their only function; they brought the sympathetic imagination of the poet to bear on contemporary books as well as books of the past; and in the hands of De Quincey, Macaulay, Matthew Arnold, and Greg, who had their natural tendency to sympathetic insight confirmed by French example, criticism rose in England to the rank of literature. Nor has it ceased to feel its higher mission or to drink at French sources of inspiration. Heine, with his Gallicised Germanism, taught it another combination, that of wit, poetry, and philosophy, and there has been much effort to follow in his footsteps since the middle of the century.

6. Even the more difficult task of popularising economics was accomplished by France. St. Simon and Fourier infused into the new science a certain element of romance by introducing into it the whole sphere of government and society; they gave it the socialistic bent which has later in the century made it the special study of the new artisan reading public.

But even without this atttaction, writers like Bastiat, Chevalier, and Lavaleye popularised it by their illustrative style and their lucid exposition. John Stuart Mill, Miss Martineau, Senior, and Bagehot followed their example and made it easy reading for even the average public.

7. But it was French imaginative literature that most influenced English during the last part of our period. The French romantic movement, that culminated in the practical sphere in the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, could not fail to affect the literature of the neighbouring country as soon as the reaction from the great Revolution had lost its fierceness of antagonism. And it was the second quarter of the century that began to feel the influence of the new French poetry and fiction. Lamartine and Victor Hugo, Gautier and De Musset and Baudelaire, though the last three repelled at first by their sensuous themes and tone, gave an impulse to the romantic and passionate treatment of love in English poetry, which had been bent in that direction already by Shelley and Keats and Byron. It is apparent in the poems of Mrs. Browning, the early lyrics of Tennyson, and the Pauline of Browning. But it was rather after the middle of the century than before it that this influence became most apparent. The romance and poetry of sensuousness do not come fully into English literature till the Songs before Sunrise of Swinburne.

8. Almost the same may be said of the new French fiction The influence of even Balzac and Dumas and George Sand comes rather in the latter half of the century, though we can see that Bulwer Lytton and Lever, Thackeray and Charlotte Bronte have felt it, if not studied their books. English fiction learned from Balzac to deal with separate passions or problems or phases of human nature, from Dumas in his Gallicised imitations of Scott to treat sections of history or contemporary life in a romantic, if not sensational, way, and from Paul de Kock and Eugene Sue to concentrate interest in a dramatic plot. The later novels of George Sand, and those of Gautier, Flaubert, and Murger belong to the latter half of the century and have little influence till our own generation. French fiction at first rather affected the English acting drama. Now was

begun the habit of dramatising novels and that of adapting from French plays or romances. Theatrical audiences were not yet sufficiently acquainted with the language to find the sources of plots. And play-wrights began to hunt in its preserves. The new literary drama seldom looked to France for either material or inspiration.

9. When it or any other branch of English poetry did, it found them in a different type of literature—either in the mystical prose rhapsodies of Sénancour in Obermann, or in the romantic poetry or prose of Hugo or Lamartine. For there were two distinct attitudes in the French imagination of the second quarter of the century, corresponding to the English literary movement of half a century before—the sentimental and the romantic. The one turned sadly to nature and the past and found material and scenes for melancholy reflection that rose into almost poetic eloquence when expressed; it drew somewhat from German sources and was perhaps already affected with the pessimism which had begun again to appear in Europe in Schopenhauer the German thinker and Leopardi the Italian artist; for it found little hope in the actual state of the world; all its consolation came from mystic sympathy with either nature or religion; and it found its most natural expression in prose that passed often from rhetoric into poetry. Chateaubriand and Joseph de Maistre formed the connecting link between this school and that of Rousseau and St. Pierre, which had been more optimistic; and its most prominent representatives were Sénancour, Lamennais, Lacordaire, and Eugenie and Maurice de Guérin. They gave some of the literary colour to the Oxford movement, not only to its High Church but to its Broad Church phase. Maurice and Matthew Arnold and Clough were as much tinged with their mysticism as Newman and Keble and Faber; they all alike tried to find support for their faith in sad appeal to nature and most of them delighted in the harmonies of half-rhetorical, half-poetic prose as much as in verse. Mrs. Browning and Tennyson felt their influence too and indulged in a poetic mysticism that often became pessimistic in its view of the world. Still more was the English pulpit of the middle of the century affected by their half-poetical rhetoric as well as

their spiritual attitude; Lamennais and Lacordaire could not but mould the young preachers of the time by their eloquence. The romantic movement represented by Lamartine and Hugo with its optimistic and revolutionary ardour was not so influential in English literature till after the middle of the century; yet we can see its more cheerful attitude to the past and to nature in Macaulay and Thackeray, Kingsley and Longfellow.

10. The older literature of France continued to hold its own in the English literary mind against contemporary French literature. Rabelais, Montaigne, and Le Sage still showed their influence in the English essayists, humourists, and novelists. Molière and Beaumarchais and the older dramatists moulded English plays as much as Scribe and De Vigny. Voltaire and Rousseau and Montesquieu continued to affect English philosophical prose throughout the period especially amongst utilitarians and advanced thinkers.

## Section 3.

1. So was it with the literature of Italy and Spain. It was the older that was the more powerful over the English literary imagination. It was the Divine Comedy of Dante, the Sonnets of Petrarch, the Orlando Furioso of Ariosto, the Jerusalem Delivered of Tasso, and Don Quixote that were frequently translated into English during the period. Few of the poets in the second quarter of the century but studied them with care. The earlier poets, Wordsworth and Coleridge, Scott and Byron, Shelley and Keats were less affected by them. And yet it was Byron and Shelley and Keats that first brought Italy into note as the natural exile-home of English poets. They found that land with its newly discovered treasures of ancient art and its atmosphere of traditional art one of the finest stimuli to the imagination. Venice and the Adriatic especially inspired Byron, Florence and the Mediterranean shore Shelley and Keats and Landor. And though they did not turn to Dante and Tasso, they found many of their best themes in the older history and literature. Byron sought the subjects of two of his dramas, Marino Faliero and The Two Foscari, in older Venice, and

his stanza and the cue of the humour of Beppo and Don Juan in Pulci. Already Hookham Frere had taken the Morganti Maggiore as the model of his Monks and Giants. It was the satiric and even cynical genius of Italy that attracted the self-exiled English poet; and it was this that in Leopardi was renewing its literature. Still more did the free if not licentious tone that still clung to Italian society from older times pass with the cynicism into Byron's later work; his Beppo and Don Juan laugh morality to scorn. The genius of Shelley and Keats had no Byronic tinge and was affected by a totally different stratum of Italian life. It was the atmosphere from ancient times, the beauty of the relics of Greek art, that touched the spirit of the dying exile. Whilst it was the sense of the great human struggle towards freedom and light so manifest through all Italy and Italian history that along with the beauty of the atmosphere and the mouldering beauty of the past enamoured the imagination of the great revolutionary idealist; into the three best products of his Italian life, his Lines on the Euganean Hills, his Cenci, and his Prometheus Unbound, there passed respectively the three spirits that draw the imaginative mind to Italy, the contrastive nobleness of her scenery, of her plains and Alps, the strange medley of beauty and tragic conflict that floats down from her mediaeval life, and the footfall of ancient Greece and her incarnation of the eternal strivings of the soul of man against its conditions.

2. Landor, though coeval with these three poets, had his Italian life thrown into the second quarter of the century. He connects the later Italian influence with that of the time of Shelley and Keats. And he lived more amongst the classics of the literature. Boccaccio was his favourite and moulded his later art. The Pentameron and many of his Imaginary Conversations are attempts to revive the brilliant intellectual life of Florence of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In fact the idea of brief prose conversations between two famous characters from the same or different eras seems to have been suggested to him by the older Italian life and literature. For it was Florence with her memories of the Medicean times and their elevation of social and intellectual intercourse into a fine art that

impressed him most deeply. And it was Florence that later drew the Brownings and George Eliot and many lesser English writers to Italy and stirred their imaginations to activity by some phase of her ever-changeful genius. Her struggle for liberty and unity awakened enthusiasm in the hearts of not merely politicians but poets; and Landor, Mrs. Browning, and Swinburne gave fervid expression to the new spirit. Whilst the great shadow of her belated ecclesiasticism with all its memory of power and its atmosphere of art fell upon the minds of timid thinkers in the English Church and drew them in from the overpowering influence of new truths and new problems. Italianism in religion passed through the Oxford movement into English literature and thought either as an attractive or as a repellent force. Ancient and mediaeval Italy became again living powers in English imagination. Only in the latter half of the century did Italians in England, like the Rossettis, give direct impulse to English poetry and English art. The earlier impulse from Italians in England was more patriotic and revolutionary than artistic. Extra-parliamentary English politics was highly charged with Italian democratic fervour by Mazzini and his compatriots in London during the second quarter of the century. And his eloquent command of our language made his writings as popular with young English thought as with young Italy. There is a combination of philosophy and almost poetic inspiration in his prose that made his lofty idealism and his gospel of republicanism a powerful antidote to Carlyle's ideal of tyranny based on hero-worship. And the heroic life of Garibaldi and the practical statesmanship of Cavour helped him to keep the attention of young and imaginative England fixed upon Italy and her destinies.

## Section 4.

**1.** The same revolutionary sympathy was extended to Greece, Poland, and Spain in their attempts to throw off old tyrannies. But they were all too far from the average English mind to affect literature deeply. In the first half of the period Byron and Shelley were stirred to the heart by Greek struggles for independence; but part of their

sympathy was due to their admiration for ancient Greece, as we can see in Byron's Greek poems and references in Shelley's Hellas. Polish ardour was scattered through all Western Europe and thus left some mark in its patriotic exile upon the love of liberty in English literature. Spain during the Peninsular War drew the attention of literary England to her; but it was rather Spain of the Moorish occupation and Spain of American adventure than Spain contemporary. Lockhart's Spanish Ballads, Southey's Roderick, the Last of the Goths, Landor's Gebir, and Julian, and Washington Irving's Legends of the Conquest of Granada, Tales of the Alhambra, and Life of Columbus show the direction which interest in Spain took early in the century. As far as contemporary interest in Spain went, it was chiefly historical; Byron shows it in portions of Childe Harold, and Borrow in his Lavengro and other books. But Southey's Peninsular War and Napier's still more artistic and interesting history of the same episode in Spanish development are the truest outcome of English interest in contemporary Spain. In the second quarter of the century the reviving spirit of liberty and of literary and artistic taste drew new attention to the long-forgotten genius of the peninsula. And translations of Calderon and Lope de Vega, of Quevedo and Cervantes and of many of the old romances into English pointed out new sources of inspiration in Spain.

2. The North of Europe began in this period to enter on the stage of European literature. Swedenborg had already affected English religious thought by his mystic interpretations of the Bible and the world; and small churches of his disciples had been established in various cities of England before the close of the eighteenth century. But it was in the nineteenth that his influence spread to literature. Coleridge in the first quarter and Emerson in the second quarter of the century reveal in their lectures and essays traces of careful study of his works; he strengthened their idealism and tendency to mysticism without drawing them into his religious and philosophical eccentricities. But the English imagination was turned to a more wholesome fountain of poetry in the old Sagas by

the Frithiofsaga and other poems of the Swedish Tegnèr and the tragedies of the Danish dramatist Oehlenschläger. English literature began to recognise its Scandinavian kinship; the Norse epics and chronicles were translated and the old influence that had moulded Anglo-Saxon literature and language again appeared and quickened the reaction towards the Teutonic elements of the national character and culture. The astonishing popularity of the novels of Frederika Bremer and of the folk tales of Hans Christian Andersen in England and America amongst the middle classes confirmed the interest in the Teutonic North and brought it to bear as a wholesome literary influence, especially in the new directions of purifying literature for the inclusion of women in its audience, and of enlisting it in the service of children. And this purification was perhaps affected by the wide fame of the Danish Thorwaldsen and his popularisation of sculpture in works that would appeal to the least sensuous and most puritan imagination.

3. Holland had long lost touch with England and the English spirit; nor did she regain it in this period unless we take into account the scholarship in her universities and especially in Leyden and the power that her old painters of low life still had over our realists with the pencil and the pen. Not a few of the English novelists and sketchers of the life of the people during both this century and last, like Fielding and Smollett, Galt and Dickens, Hogarth and Gillray, Cruikshank and Phiz, have manifestly studied the pictures of Teniers and Jan Steen. Russia had only begun to creep within the pale of literary Europe; and there may be perhaps a trace of the fables of Kriloff or the satirical novels of Gogol apparent in the atmosphere of English literature towards the middle of our century. But not till the last two decades of it do the traces of it become unmistakable; for then Ivan Turgenief and Dostoiefsky and Tolstoi were translated into English and were colouring the French influence on English fiction. Bowring's translations from Russian, Servian, Polish, Spanish, Magyar, Bohemian and Dutch poets, between 1821 and 1832, familiarised English writers with foreign work.

## Section 5.

**1.** It was the vast expansion of Anglo-Saxondom in America, the East, and the Southern hemisphere that told most on the literature of the nineteenth century. The British dominions alone meant a lifetime of travel for a man of culture, if he were to make himself acquainted with them all. Books of travel came to be as common as the publication of letters and journals in the previous century. The doings of the English abroad, of the English navy and army and administrators, grew important enough to occupy a large part of the English literary world. The Napoleonic wars had drawn England far afield; and her interests lay in every section of the globe. Now it was an American war, again a new conquest in India; now an Ashantee war, again the opium war with China; now the abolition of slavery in the West Indies and at the Cape of Good Hope, again the war in Burmah; now the constitutional agitations in Canada, again the growth of settlement in Australia; now the romance of Arctic voyagers, Parry or Franklin, again the achievements of a solitary Englishman like Rajah Brooke in Borneo. Newspapers, magazines, and books were busy with the ever-changing scenes of British energy abroad and the ever-growing labyrinth of British interests. Some of the literary men went out and saw the new Anglo-Saxon world for themselves; Macaulay went as legislator to India, Galt went to Canada. Some like Coleridge and Southey with their pantisocracy scheme on the Susquehanna contemplated settling in one of its distant parts; the economists and political thinkers busied themselves with the relations that should hold between the various kinds of new dominion and the home country; historians prepared to record the development of the empire; orators in parliament like Brougham and Cobden and Bright gained or widened their reputation for eloquence on the new topics; pessimist and imaginative writers like Carlyle, driven to point out practical remedies for the evils they deplored, found them in emigration to the new dominions of the Anglo-Saxon race.

**2.** The restless, almost feverish, activity that had taken possession of all spheres of the English-speaking world had already shown itself in literature and thought. It came

from the ferment of an empire expanding into every corner of the earth, and now not merely by means of war or commerce, but by settlement, discovery, and missionary effort. A feeling began to arise that the English race and English language were about to cover the whole world. The imperial note of Elizabethan literature that had come from the ubiquitous enterprise of the time reappeared in the sphere of imagination and thought. Writers grew proud of the task of perfecting their own tongue. From all sides flowed words and expressions into it through the channels of science and art, scholarship and commerce. And yet it became conscious of its own genius and its new destiny and looked back with more eagerness and dignity to native models and sources. It looked to classics and to foreign literatures rather as a conqueror that would master and annex than as a worshipper that would admire and follow. It had something of the same attitude in Shakespeare and Spenser; all languages and literatures, and especially the classical, were imperially despoiled of their treasures to fit out the new world of English imagination. During the two centuries between, except perhaps in Milton, the English tongue had been willing to take the place of a disciple, glad of any precedent consecrated by time. Now it ranged again through all spheres and tongues and literatures and brought in spoils that were to be built into its own structure and seem almost native to itself. The fashion of quoting from foreign languages and especially classics in order to embellish was now rapidly antiquated by the imperial sense of native power. The tyranny of classical precedent and model broke down before the fast-growing pride in home-grown art.

3. And classical scholarship itself benefited by this revolution. A sense of the humanity that lived in Greek and Roman breasts crept into it. It studied the ancient world now as a living thing with an individuality of its own and not as an ideal anticipation of modern life. The Greeks and Romans were no longer taken as having laid down literary and artistic and political laws for all time, but as wise experimenters in the same directions as modern civilisation. Lessons could be learned from their solutions

of the problems of life and art, but not final wisdom. Imaginative men became scholars and touched the old material and style into new life. Poets like Shelley and Mrs. Browning set themselves to give English readers the true beauty and greatness of classical poetry and prose, as Marlowe and Chapman had done before in the Elizabethan age. And translation became a fine art that did its best to lose none of the fine gold in the process of passing ancient thought and feeling through the crucible. Greek and Roman history had to be re-written from the new point of view that imaginative sympathy and the discoveries of philology and archæology had given. The ancient world was no less enthusiastically studied than before; but in the vast expansion of the audience and of the interests of scholarship and art, of literature and thought, it seemed to fall into the background compared with its place in former periods. Other studies and the growth of modern science and art began to overshadow it.

## Section 6.

1. But nothing was more effective in this respect than the re-discovery of native literature made before the century began. It was indeed a surprise to scholars brought up in the pseudo-classical bigotry of the Queen Anne literature to find such power, such imagination, such suggestiveness of style, such wealth of diction and illustration in the long-despised poetry and prose of England. Even in Anglo-Saxon and in the deranged and uncertain language of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there was found astonishing activity of fancy and thought and research. Critics saw Homeric power as well as a native shadowy grandeur of poetry in the Beowulf and a variety of imaginative interests and talents in the trove of the Exeter and Vercelli books. They saw in the alloy of the middle English period much pure gold that might be refined again and used in the noblest poetry. Indeed the movement became reactionary and extreme, as is the case with all re-discoveries; beauty and power were seen where there were none; and tedious and commonplace productions that had deserved the oblivion they had fallen into were dragged forth and offered

to factitious and happily brief admiration. English scholarship in the first half of our century tended to grow antiquarian.

**2.** But its growth had a great effect upon style both poetic and prose. The native words that had held their own even in the most Latinised diction were illuminated by the new research and gained a new sense of their long ancestry; they gathered to them an atmosphere of suggestive vigour and poetry that renewed their life. Words and idioms too that had been banished by a pseudo-classical age from recognised literary style began to reassert themselves as the true stuff of poetry and imaginative prose. Saxonism became with some a passion and an eccentricity. But with most it did not drive out the old Latinism, but only took its natural place as ally. There was a vigorous resort especially by poetry to the older and more Saxon vocabulary; but foreign words that had taken root in the language and assumed the native habits were accepted as indigenous. Shorter poems and especially lyrics threw off the cumbrous phraseology in which the Restoration and the Queen Anne age had almost stifled natural emotion. Without this return to native sources of diction, the new outburst of poetry and imaginative prose could never have found expression that would appeal to the whole of the new-born national audience; it would have been maimed; in fact it could not have come into existence; the more Saxonised utterance was as essential a condition and result of the re-admission of the people to English literature as the new emotion or thought. Narrow cultured circles would never have overleapt the precedents of the Queen Anne period, however fresh or striking the fancies they had to express. It was the nationalisation of the literature that demanded appeal to all the resources of the language, the old as well as the more recent, the native as well as the foreign. And it was the new popular element in the audience that made a return to Saxonism a necessity; the more popular forms of both poetry and prose reveal an increasing use of native words and phrases and idioms.

**3.** But the true antidote to over-Saxonism lay in the preference shown for the Elizabethan literature. There the

writers saw how natural a Latinised diction was to dignity of thought and emotion, how unsuited the merely Saxon elements of the vocabulary were to the higher and more abstract problems and thoughts that belong to the noblest poetry. In the tragedies of Shakespeare they felt the power that lay in an amalgam of Saxon and Latin words; they saw how difficult it would have been to express the sublimer meditations of Hamlet or Timon or the greater passions of Lear or Macbeth or Othello without the free use of foreign words that the Renaissance had introduced. Milton, too, showed them how sublime the music that English could reach, if it rejected none of the foreign elements it had incorporated. The simpler emotions and more primitive phases of civilisation could be put more powerfully and melodiously in the native diction. But when poetry and more imaginative prose rose to heights of abstract reflection or of great or subtle passion, or indulged in the more refined humour, it broke down. Anglo-Saxon, when it came into contact with Latin civilisation was the language of a primitive people accustomed to maritime and war-like pursuits, incapable of philosophical thought, untouched by the refinements of art, or the subtleties of a highly developed religion. The vocabulary that could fit itself to the expression of all but the primitive emotions and thoughts had to come from without; and it came with Latin Christianity and the Gallicised Latinism of the Normans. And when at last the English people emerged from its inchoate and mongrel stage into the full-grown and vigorous and united nation of the Elizabethan age, a still greater influx of foreign words was needed to express its higher thoughts and passions. So varied and subtle were the developments of the new national life that the old language could not have covered them; and a vast expansion of both the diction and the style was an absolute essential. The inundation of Latinisms was as necessary to the greatness of Elizabethan literature as the unification of the people and the growth of patriotism and national thought. For the English mind ventured out into new regions that needed more than the mere descriptive vocabulary of Anglo-Saxon. All the new literary forms that based themselves upon generalisation and abstract speculation demanded a wider

and more varied linguistic sphere to draw from. And hence it is that, when poetry became didactic and philosophical after the Restoration, it became Latinised in diction. And whenever in the age of expansion or nationalization it rose above the merely lyrical or conversational, or the utterance of the simpler emotions and social facts, it retained and extended the sphere of Latinism. The main advance it made on the Queen Anne use of the classical vocabulary was that it took a more masterly grasp of it; it learned from the Elizabethans and Milton to make Latin words and idioms humbly serve its highest purposes, instead of fitting its purposes to them. One of the differences between the use of classical elements by Shakespeare and Pope may be expressed thus; the older poet melted them and ran them into whatever mould he desired; the later chiseled his forms out of them by patient art and without the heat of passion, and he had to fit the result to the natural grain and flaws of his material.

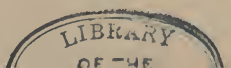
4. There was a return to the Shakespearean method in the new age of expansion. The writers took hold of the etymology and the inner meaning of the classical elements of English and fitted them anew to their imaginative purposes, like a living garment of thought and feeling. The complete fusion of the Latin and Saxon elements of our vocabulary was the mark of the best prose as of the best poetry; for the primitive feelings must mingle with the deepest thought in all permanent literature; and for pathos, awe, pity, sympathy with nature, sorrow, joy, the old Teutonic words and idioms, saturated with nationalism for a thousand years and more, must ever be the best; whilst for the treatment of all the abstract problems of the higher thought and for the purposes of the more urban types of humour, satire, irony, sarcasm, burlesque, the mock-heroic, the less concrete vocabulary of an advanced civilisation was needed; and here the Latin elements of English came in. If we take an imaginative prose-writer like Lamb we see almost at a glance how "mingled is the yarn" of English diction in his age, and how superior it is for variety and flexibility to the prose of Dr Johnson or even of The Spectator; it is fitted to every mood; and in his Elia he keeps running over the whole

gamut of human emotion and caprice; now he is almost Johnsonian in the expression of humour, in his mock-heroic vein; in the next paragraph he has become almost purely Saxon and lyrical in his pathos. In his essays on The South Sea House, New Year's Eve, and A Quaker's Meeting, for example, he delights in testing the variety of the English tongue, and proving the versatility of its composite character; he approaches to lyrical rhythm and diction in some of the passages that stir memory or the sublimer feelings; but he neighbours them with passages almost as Latinised as philosophical prose.

5. And it is in Lamb that we see the high-water mark of the style that deals in reminiscence of former English literature. Every sentence of his Elia has some flavour of the older periods. It would need one who knew the whole range of English poetry and prose from 1650 down to 1820 to home his phraseology. He does not so often quote or rather pretend to quote as take a phrase, a metaphor, a word, an old usage, from the older authors or from his contemporaries. His mind is so saturated with the best English literature that he has often hedged in quotation points what is a mere adaptation or rough mosaic from an author whilst he constantly leaves unmarked scraps that belong to his favourites. And his chief favourites are Shakespeare, Milton, and the Authorised Version; the other Elizabethan dramatists, the great prose contemporaries of our epic poet, the essay-writers and play-wrights of the Queen Anne period attract him only in a secondary degree. But how thoroughly the diction of the earlier half of our century was dyed with the great past of English literature and especially with Elizabethanism, nothing would show better than a good commentary on Elia. Out of the new middle class Lamb came and for it he wrote; and we see they delighted in the old words and old usages, the quaint idioms that lingered on in the provincial circles, in the sect of the Quakers, and in the speech of New England. His archaisms had no artificial sound to most of the new audience, the readers of such periodicals as The London Magazine, in which the essays appeared. They still used in daily conversation the idioms and words and meanings that

had become antiquated in the London literature of the eighteenth century. For the old ballads, the Authorised Version of the Bible, Milton, and Bunyan had left them green and still threw a halo of imagination around them. Lamb was only stirring the deepest feelings of the more national audience when he ventured on giving such a quaint flavour to his diction.

6. And in the poetry of the time it was not Wordsworth's crusade against Pope's conventions that originated this return to the older and more popular sources of the language. The crusade was only a symptom of the renaissance of the people in literature. Out of the people came the fresh impulse to a great poetry, and to the people it had to address itself. It was the popular tongue that it had to adopt and refine, that tongue which had been so ennobled by perpetual study of the English Bible. The natural affinity of poetry to the linguistic past led it at once when it was bent again towards nature to seek its new language in the traditional literature of the people—the ballads, the Bible, Milton, and Bunyan; there the best phraseology of the Elizabethan era had become consecrated by long use amongst the people in their highest moods and there the popular language had been elevated and refined by constant intercourse with lofty thought and passion. This older literature of the people gave the only possible medium of communication between the new authors and the new audience. The imaginative literature of a nation must address the national mind and not a narrow cultured circle, if it is to be permanent. And when its audience broadens from the court or capital to the people it is the people's language and not the language of learning or culture that it must adopt. And through the long generations of submergence the English people had been ennobling their language and raising it into fitness for a great literature in continual study of the English Bible and of the books that were based on it, books like Paradise Lost and the Pilgrim's Progress. It is the Biblical tinge that was the striking feature of the new diction, when the people emerged again and formed the new patrons of literature. In the eighteenth century it had been the price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of the book that made it lucrative to the writer, and rich and influential patrons were all that was needed. Now it was the numbers of a book sold that made it pay; and the larger audience freed the author from the tyranny of a small and immediate circle. But if a book was to succeed it had to be in the literary language of the people. And hence the large influence that the English Bible now seemed to have over the diction of prose as well as poetry.

7. But culture and scholarship, following in the lines that the popular movement took, had discovered another noble source of inspiration and influence in Shakespeare's plays. By the second half of the era of expansion a large portion of the new audience had lost the keen edge of their traditional puritanism and were to some extent secularised in tastes. They no longer objected to all plays as wicked, and, reading the Elizabethan dramatists and especially Shakespeare, they found little that was impure and much that chose the very highest plane of thought and feeling. Shakespeare thus came to be added to the old literature of the people, his works became a household book in a large section of the middle and artisan classes during the earlier half of the nineteenth century. And hence it is that so many of the poets Shakespearianised and that there was so deep a tinge of Shakespearianism in the best prose diction. From Wordsworth to Tennyson the poetry adopted his phraseology and echoed his rhythms and felt no shame; from Lamb to Kingsley and Ruskin prose counted it one of its highest prerogatives to weave in Shakespearian suggestion.

8. And from all kinds and periods of English literature the style took new life and found new material and cues. For the learned societies, the reprints, the scholarship and research brought even the oldest prose and poetry within reach of every writer and reader. The movement towards simplicity and variety in style and diction found no difficulty in models and expression. For every age contributed its vocabulary and forms. In poetry especially we have an inundation of archaisms; the beautiful old words and phrases that had been forgotten by the highly cultured age of Queen Anne were resumed in numbers; Wordsworth, Keats,

Browning, Tennyson had no hesitation in reviving idioms and words that had dropped out of the literary language, provided they were dipped in emotion, expressive, and melodious. So the old poetry was studied for its effects. There was no attempt as there had been in the age of Dryden and Pope to modernise Chaucer. But his quaint picturesqueness and humour reappear in prose as well as in poetry. Washington Irving shows his influence in the one, Hood and Hunt in the other. But it was the Elizabethan era that gave the best models and next to it the seventeenth century with its Milton in poetry and Sir Thomas Browne, Fuller, and Taylor in prose. So wide-spread was the influence of these that nothing short of the analysis of the whole of the imaginative literature would reveal it in full. In drama and lyric it is perhaps most apparent. For Lamb, Coleridge, Keats, Byron, Shelley, Landor, Browning, Tennyson were all led to the dramatic and lyric form by the Elizabethan and Miltonic example. As the drama of Shakespeare was now better studied than acted, the dramatic poems now written addressed themselves to a student audience rather than a theatrical. And all the old lyrical metres and themes and even the phrases were revived. No poetry could find its way so quickly to the hearts of the people as the lyric. And the recognition of the ancient ballads and songs by literature opened again the fountain of song even to the most cultured writers. No quality is more striking in the new poetry than its lyricism. This at once reveals an essential similarity between the first half of the nineteenth century and the Elizabethan age. The secret is that the literary audience was again national. And the simpler forms, that appeal directly to the human heart without need of much education, were certain to be successful again. Out of no other age except the Elizabethan could so many beautiful lyrics be gathered. Every poet tried the form and often succeeded in it. Satire, drama, epic, ode, sonnet needed a medium of culture. A good song, like good wine, "needed no bush;" it commended itself at once to every ear and heart and fixed itself for ever in the national consciousness. We have, therefore, the same phenomenon in the period as appeared in the reign of Elizabeth; the literary poets were also the popular poets; however

philosophical or didactic, sublime or satirical they might be in their more elaborate efforts, they could be at times as simple in emotion, language, and melody as the writers of the old ballads and songs.

## Section 7.

1. What made this lyrical movement easy was the development and spread of music. Singing was not merely cultivated as a fine art by great vocalists like Malibran and Mario and Grisi; but in every town and village choirs sprang up and every sweet voice was trained. Originality was not confined to the great composers in oratorio and opera, like Beethoven, Bellini, and Mendelssohn; as in the Elizabethan age there were many native composers who could touch the heart with the simpler forms of melody and imitate the pathos of the old English music. Instrumentation spread with the piano into every household during the period and confirmed or revived musical taste. Few poets but had the old tunes sing in the ear of their boyhood and youth; melody entered as a natural element into every imaginative mind and this the melody of the lyric. Hence the outburst of lyricism in the period. Some poets like Moore and Tannahill devoted most of their talents to the writing of songs. Others like Scott and Shelley and Mrs. Browning introduced the lyrical spirit into every poem they wrote. Nor did the prose escape this tunefulness. The sentence became much more rhythmical; phrases touched the ear as well as the mind; the old alliteration reappeared in prose, but in a more artistic and concealed form. Without the monotony of the Johnsonian period, the sentence attained all its balance and completeness. Moreover there came into the best prose a sense of larger harmony that took in the paragraph and in some cases long passages. In Carlyle, in spite of his often rugged phraseology, there is at times a musical unity in whole chapters. So is it with De Quincey and Ruskin. And Macaulay never fails to keep the ear as well as the mind in expectance through the paragraph. Prose became distinctly conscious of the great effects that music had attained by contrast and an intricate harmony.

**2.** The other arts felt the new impulse as much as music and developed rapidly during the first half of the century. Lawrence and Constable, Turner and David Cox, Etty and Landseer, Wilkie and Cruikshank raised the art of the brush and pencil higher than it had ever reached in England. Sculpture and architecture, though they did not advance as much as painting, received an impetus, the one from the study of the newly discovered specimens of Greek statuary, the other from the new enthusiasm for the old Gothic churches and abbeys. These arts have ever a refining influence on both writers and readers and they inspire literature and are inspired by it. The work of Turner with its hazy power and suggestiveness is the counterpart of much of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's and most of Shelley's and Keats'. The Lines on Tintern Abbey, The Ancient Mariner, Kubla Khan, Christabel, Alastor, and Endymion have the grandeur of the half-seen and mystical about them; they depict the beauty of nature with an atmosphere of the spiritual meaning that is behind it. Their pictures have the boundary line between the seen and the unseen left undefined, like those of Turner's later style. And most of the poets aimed at complete portraits or pictures of nature, whilst the novelists began to interpanel their scenes and conversations with landscape. And the art of illustration, now that it had been brought to bear on books, confirmed this tendency in fiction and descriptive or narrative poetry. Dickens began his career as a novelist by writing the letter-press for a series of plates by Seymour; the result was the Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club; and the habit of keeping a definite picture in his mind seems to have followed him all through his novels. Thackeray had much of the same habit of mind from his work as a draughtsman. It is some striking scene that these two writers are ever aiming at for the display of their best art. In poetry it is the same; Scott is nothing if he is not a picturesque poet, and Childe Harold is little else than a series of poetical pictures. Sculpture we can see guiding the imagination of many of the writers of the period; its influence is apparent in some of De Quincey's sketches, in Mrs. Shelley's Frankenstein, and in Landor's Imaginary Conversations. Whilst the new developments of architecture enabled the poets and novelists to build with their

imagination "wondrous pleasure-domes" in their productions.

3. But it is the arts of acting and oratory that are nearest to imaginative literature; and though they had fallen into a subordinate place compared with other arts, they perhaps affected it more than they. The Kembles and Keans, Macready and Phelps quite sustained the histrionic art at the height to which Garrick had raised it. And not a few of the writers of the period were good actors, like Sheridan Knowles and Dickens, or stage critics like Lamb and Thackeray, or were ambitious of writing for the stage like Coleridge and Byron, Douglas Jerrold and Bulwer Lytton, Browning and Tennyson. The division of the drama into acting drama and poetical drama did not prevent the poets striving to succeed in both. The recurrent revival of Shakespeare's plays upon the stage kept alive the idea that stage success could be combined with true poetry and deep thought. It was ever forgotten that the drama was the chief medium of popular literature and thought in the reign of Elizabeth; there was no journalism, no fiction, no secular oratory, no essay, no intellectual amusement then; all those who wished to get into touch with the intellectual world or even the world of action went to the theatre, unless they were absorbed in theology; it was the national entertainment, the national rostrum, the national press; it had no rival in the mind of the English people. All this had changed and draining through the Restoration comedy the art had lost its hold upon all the serious sections of the English public; it had become but the passing amusement of the more leisured strata of city society; the change of the time of representation from the afternoon to the three hours before midnight is significant; the theatrical audiences of Elizabeth's time had brought their faculties in the keenest condition to the enjoyment of the plays; it was a strenuous amusement, the mental counterpart to the open-air exercises of the English people; by the nineteenth century it had become a passive enjoyment to be ranked with that of any spectacle which would fill in the fagged hours between dinner and sleep. It matters not how poetic or creative the mind that may apply itself to the

dramatic art, it can never become national in England again, till its literary rivals are silenced and a national audience again brings the most strenuous thought to its enjoyment.

4. The acting drama remained in our period a subordinate literary form, with a strong influence over the dialogue and plot of fiction. It made readers expect a well-concealed dénouement and a narrative interlarded with conversational scenes. The poetical drama affected both poetry and prose. Much of the poetry became dramatic in spirit even when it was not so in form; the monologue in character, especially in the latter part of the period, grew to be a common type of vigorous poetry; Browning raised it to its highest point of art. The dramatic scene or conversation also became a favourite with imaginative writers. In the hands of Landor and Helps it brought prose close to the realm of poetry.

5. Oratory, too, retired into the background of literature, although it progressed and developed greatly during the period. It was now drawn from the court of justice and the House of Commons to the hustings and the public meeting. It was largely popularised during the period. Even forensic and parliamentary eloquence acquired a popular tone from the elaborate reports of speeches in the daily newspapers. Verbatim reporting had introduced a new era into oratory; it ensured for the best efforts of the art permanence in literature. And thus more brilliancy and imagination, more accuracy of style and more thought appeared in the finest productions of the forum and the pulpit. More attention was paid to oratory as an art; Canning and Brougham, O'Connell and Shiel, Macaulay and Derby, Cobden and Bright, Disraeli and Gladstone appeared as parliamentary and popular orators; and their speeches had as great effect as the greatest of the past. Hall and Foster, Chalmers and Guthrie, Channing and Edward Irving, Newman and Wilberforce, Maurice and Robertson raised the reputation of English didactic eloquence.

6. It is a popular atmosphere and a great cause that nurture oratory best. And the American republic with its democratic atmosphere and its slavery question is one of the

best examples of this; it had more men of eloquence as compared with men of letters during this period than all the monarchies of Europe put together; Clay and Calhoun, Webster and Wendell Phillips, Channing and Theodore Parker, Sumner and Greely, Gough and Ward Beecher give oratory a disproportionate importance in American literature when compared with that of any other country in the time. In English literature it had a minor place; and yet it helped to mould the prose style. Journalism acquired a tinge of rhetoric from it. For some of the most brilliant critics and essayists entered parliament; whilst others were engaged in discussing parliamentary and popular speeches in leading articles. The style of Brougham and Jeffrey and Sydney Smith was moulded by their oratorical pursuits; and it gave the cue to magazinism through the earlier part of the period. The prose of Coleridge, philosophical though it meant to be, was tinged with his inclination to preach. Thomas Browne and Christopher North were drawn into a rhetorical style by the influence of their professional pursuits. And some of the most prominent writers were also clergymen; the historical style of Milman and Thirlwall, Merivale and Lingard, the philosophical style of Maurice and Mansel, Whately and Martineau could not but be tinged by the rhetoric of the pulpit. Crabbe and Bowles, Heber and Croly, Keble and Kingsley could not escape in their poetry the didactic tone or the rhetorical form that their profession was certain to give. The influence of oratory is apparent in the essay-style of Hazlitt and De Quincey and in passages in the fiction of Bulwer Lytton and Disraeli and Kingsley. Even Carlyle and Buckle, philosophical and elevated though they aim at being, are often infected with the pulpiteering style of the age; they can seldom refrain from preaching. But the salient instance of the influence of oratory is Macaulay; much as he protests against the Johnsonian balanced sentence, there is no better instance of regular rhetorical construction and rhythm in the nineteenth century than his own; he is on the rostrum whether he is reviewing a book or drawing a character, making an abstract of a diary, or homing a charge, writing an essay or making a speech, describing a battle or whitewashing a hero. Essayist or parliamentary orator, critic or historian, it is all the same; he

is ever the rhetorician and preacher with a popular but educated audience before him. The new reading public had been accustomed for generations to sermons; and when they turned to a secular literature they still expected something of the sermon. It was this that made the essay next to the novel the most important form of literature; and it was this that made Macaulay so popular and fiction so didactic.

## Section 8.

1. But if the arts moulded the style and coloured the spirit of literature, the sciences had most to do with renewing its ideas. And never was there a period more fertile in the results of scientific research. But of the sciences it was astronomy that most impressed the popular mind; its discoveries and thoughts and speculations gave infinite meaning to the nightly spectacle that met the eye of the commonest observer and chimed with the most reverent of religious feelings. In the earlier half of the century no science was so popular as this. With little trouble the astronomer could strip his thoughts and discoveries of all abstruseness and appeal direct to the primitive sense of poetry in the human breast. It was thus that the names of Herschel, Whewell, Nichol, Brewster, Baden Powell, Mary Somerville were as widely known amongst popular readers as in the scientific world. The vast spaces and numbers and sizes to be dealt with were deeply impressive to minds that were essentially arithmetical from long contact with trade and commerce. The East, out of which the Bible—the book of the new audience—came, had been as devoted to astronomy; this is the science that moulds the thought and picturesqueness of some of its most striking poetry. It was natural then that minds saturated with Biblical imagery should greatly enjoy the discoveries that the great telescopes now made. Astronomy seemed almost a religious science, it gave such a sense of that infinity which is the essence of Godhead; it deepened that awe which is the basis of worship. It was, therefore, the science that most gave its spirit and thought to the new literature. We find it tinge some of the best sermons and stimulate great eloquence as in Chalmer's Astronomical Discourses. It became part of

the stock-in-trade of the scenic novelist. It supplied the never-failing background for Carlyle's most impressive pictures; the infinities and the immensities give solemnity if not sublimity to some of the finest passages of Sartor Resartus and afterwards grew into a mannerism in his writings. But poetic imagination was most touched by it. No school of poetry but found it a treasure-house of simile and illustration and emotional stimulus. Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, Coleridge, Rogers, Moore, Clough, Tennyson, all appeal to it when they mean to be most impressive. Later on, when the question of life and especially intellectual and emotional life on other worlds came to be hotly discussed and seemed to introduce a doubt into the doctrine of the atonement, the more religious section of the new audience began to shrink from their favourite science as sharing in the unorthodox reputation of all science.

2. But that which shook theology to its centre again was the science that was deciphering the history of the earth. Geology, as soon as it began to throw back life on the earth millions of years, touched the interpretation of the Bible. The story of creation in Genesis became the arena of the hottest discussions of the century. Books like the Vestiges of Creation seemed to threaten the very foundations of religion for a time. Hugh Miller tried to stem the flood of doubt that broke into the sphere of theology, by taking the Mosaic account of creation as allegorical and attempting to reconcile it with the story that the rocks told. By his reverent treatment of the subject and his lucid half-poetical style he made the science popular with the orthodox section of the new audience. But the theory of development, which the record of the strata and their fossils seemed to point out and confirm, proved too much for his attempt at conciliation, and the two spheres became again divorced. Geology grew again into a word of evil omen, till biology set up for itself and took upon it the chief odium of the evolutionary theory and its proof. The great era of fertilisation of literature by these two sciences came later in the century. Yet Buckland and Lyell, Forbes and Murchison in geology, and Prichard and Owen and Carpenter in the history of living tissue did much to popularise the more striking discoveries and

speculations of the new sciences. And before the close of the period we find imaginative writers, like Ruskin in his Modern Painters, bringing them in as the best allies of art and poetry. It was indeed the new microscopic and speculative study of nature that had chiefly aided in revolutionising the picturesque style. Landscape and poetic description, even in the latter half of last century, had never got beyond the broader features of scenery. Now they entered into the minuter beauty of life upon the earth; they attempted truth of detail. And the worshipful sympathy with nature, that had become with Wordsworth the spirit of poetry, entered into painting and into prose literature. Turner is the best instance in the one, and Ruskin in the other. Whilst the novelists had to make description of scenery one of the features of their art; and as the century went on, it grew at once more subtle, more poetic, and more like the painter's art.

3. But the effect of science on the literature of the nineteenth century was far greater as an atmosphere round it than as a shaping, tutoring hand. Its general conclusions soon pass into the spiritual air we breathe and carry germs of health or disease. And imaginative work, as having a larger element of emotion in it, is the first to feel any change, however subtle, in the atmosphere of thought. Not the mere metaphors or similes or illustrations are changed, but its very life. A new epoch-making idea, therefore, soon revolutionises the art of an age. And no period reveals such a change in spirit as the first half of the nineteenth century.

## Section 9.

1. For it was an era of marvellous expansion of thought by science. The curtain of the sky had been drawn and the human race had now infinity and eternity as the background of its drama. The spiritual eye gazed through worlds and systems that had no end and were yet all related to our own cosmic atom; it seemed, in tracing back the origin of the microcosm, to traverse countless æons of the past. The Prometheus Unbound of Shelley and the Sartor

Resartus of Carlyle best illustrate the effect of this delimitation of human view upon literature; the drama glories in the power of the human spirit to overleap all boundaries of time and space; and the eye of Teufelsdröckh is seldom off the stars and the ocean of being of which they are but the spindrift. It is true that Paradise Lost is as deeply immersed in stellar infinity; but it is as an external system, unrelated to the human system except through the campaigning genius of Satan. In these more modern books the infinities and eternities themselves are stirred to their depths by sympathy with human fate; the great worlds of night have "a tear for pity". It was this new sense of the kinship of the cosmos that transformed the poetic spirit in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. The eighteenth had felt nothing of it even though in the poems of Ossian the stars and the tempests are the commonest of stage properties. The human soul now ranged through space and time seeking and finding brotherhood a part of all that it had thought or known. Wordsworth and Byron, the idealist and the satirist, alike felt the new impulse to transcend the limits of mere human life and human senses. The one is ever linking the little tragedies of life on the earth with the destinies of the universe. The other in his Cain, and Heaven and Hell brings the Newtonian system to bear on the dramatisation of Genesis, and in Manfred makes the stars the confidantes of his world-anguished hero.

**2.** World-anguished was indeed the characteristic note of the new imaginative literature all over Europe—an amalgam of the revolutionism of the time and the sense of vastitude that science had given to thought. Kin as the human spirit now felt itself with infinity, it had been dwarfed and crushed by the decentralisation of the world on which it found itself. Even the planetary system was but an atom in the all; and what was the individual ego to that atom? A sadness, a self-pity came over the thoughts of men. And at the same time there came the revolutionary stimulus of the age in reaction against this imprisonment and overshadowing of the ego. Passion would revolt against the insignificance of man's destiny and place in the universe, as it had revolted against the yoke of his own customs and

in bloodshed overthrown their tyranny. The new world-anguish was bold as well as self-pitiful and in the poetry of Byron and Shelley would force its way into the shrine of being and free man from the limitations of his insignificance; it would assert his divinity, his equality with the best of the universe, his freedom in it. This deification of the human spirit, so common a poetic reaction from the world-anguish, was hardened into a creed too in the religion of positivism, which at once recognised the limitations of man and asserted his divine claims. In Byron it took the form of a cynical egotism that would laugh down creeds and moralities, and, finding itself still impotent, ended in pessimism, as with Leopardi, Schopenhauer, and, to some extent, Carlyle. In Shelley it became optimistic; belief in the power of revolution to overthrow all limitations of the human spirit ended in the passionate thought that only tyrants, and tyrannical laws and customs and creeds had to be removed, and man would reveal all his native divinity; the world would be as it ought to be. World-anguish, which indeed often pressed heavy on his mind, was not seldom transfigured during his creative efforts into world-happiness.

3. The new sense of man's kinship with the cosmos demanded a revision of philosophy as well as of the poetic art. And this revision was as usual accomplished in two ways that took opposite directions. Idealism, culminating in Hegel, sought the explanation of all the phenomena of the universe in spirit; positivism, taking its cue from Comte, immersed the whole of existence in matter; the one gloried in speculation, the other was content to observe and await the result of observation. The expansion of scientific thought made the positive view of life the most victorious and progressive; it seemed to fit into all the new inventions and discoveries and methods of discovery. It falls into the background during an age in which science is unproductive; the utilities then seem of little avail in the world of thought, and matter seems the barren element. A period like the nineteenth century with its exceptional triumphs of observation and reasoning on observation could not fail to adopt the positive attitude even in literature. But its greatest successes during the earlier half of our century

were in logic and history. It led to the renascence of Baconian logic, the enthusiastic study of those mental forms that are suited more to investigation and to the proof of the results of observation than to subtlety of conclusions. Induction seemed again a new thing and completely overshadowed deductive logic. So in history the past had to be re-observed from the new point of view; documentary evidence became the all-important factor in writing of the past; the methods of the law-courts became the methods of historical research; and research and the correct presentation of facts triumphed over interpretation. Yet even in the speculative treatment of history the positive attitude had its successes. Buckle and others took the new materialistic views of life and applied them to the past; they tried to find the sources of historical events and developments and characteristics in the material conditions and surroundings.

4. As a rule the positive mode of viewing life is unfertile in the realm of pure imagination. For it insists on limiting all flights of the mind to the range of facts. It makes the speculative faculty move in harness and yokes it to observation. Imagination has to become a patient drudge that awaits the bidding of the senses. Not yet had realism come into fiction with its professions of scientific purpose and scientific method. Had it appeared early in the century, it would have meant a period meagre in imaginative literature. For realistic portraiture and picture have soon to pass into mere photography. The positive method affected poetry and fiction only so far as to import the results of the new sciences into them as illustrations, figures, and even atmosphere; the truths that astronomy, geology, and biology taught about the universe and man's place in it became new starting-points for imaginative flights. And poetry and fiction breathed a freer air in the new infinitudes of space and time that science seemed to give them.

5. It is ever the idealistic view of life that gives fertility to the imaginative literature of a period, the view that the spirit is the creative element, the only true existence in the world. And during the nineteenth century science on its more speculative side has more and more tended to confirm this view; for it has in its progress broken down the barriers

that the senses seemed to set up on the basis of indisputable fact; by the increasing powers of the telescope and the microscope and the spectrum it has unfolded spheres of existence that the boldest positivism would not have dreamt of; by its attempts to get at the principle of things, it has resolved, in the ultimate analysis that transcends the senses, all matter into energy and to this it has given immortality. But for long science and the positive method were thought of as the antagonists of imagination as of faith. And idealism seemed rather a reaction than an independent and originative attitude.

6. From Wordsworth to Tennyson, from Godwin to Hawthorne, whatever views and thoughts of science poetry and fiction might adopt, however agnostic or sceptical or antagonistic they might be in the sphere of faith, they ever idealised their material, they dealt with life as transcending all the knowledge of the senses, they found spirit the true originative element. Both poets and novelists attempted scientific problems and adopted the most advanced scientific thought; but always from the speculative and spiritual point of view. Wordsworth, for example, in his Ode on Intimations of Immortality treats heredity as but resurrection of spirit; Mrs. Shelley in her Frankenstein idealises the investigations of physiology and biology and attempts to imagine the science of life as an art, the art of creation. But it would need analysis of all the poetry and the fiction of the period to follow out the idealistic attitude.

7. In the realm of faith the positive atmosphere seemed wholly antagonistic and destructive. And in the second quarter of the century, a violent reaction set in against the burden of doubt or the indifference of agnosticism. It took two forms in England; the one continued the romantic movement in religion and sought the forms and beliefs of a former period; the other accepted reason as the final court of appeal in matters of faith as in matters of fact, but found the reconciliation of faith and fact in the ideal sphere. The Oxford High Church movement, which led so many of its foremost adherents to its logical issue, emigration to the oldest representative of Christianity, and the Broad-Church movement, which led a number to

Unitarianism, had a more immediate effect in literature than religious phenomena usually have. The fiery passion of the post-Revolution time and the centralisation of the movements in one of the English universities were the causes of this. And on the one side we have Newman and Faber, Keble and Pusey, and on the other Maurice and Jowett, Stanley and Mark Pattison, F. W. Newman and J. A. Froude, F. W. Robertson and Kingsley, Clough and Matthew Arnold. It is a noticeable feature that, though the Broad-Church movement never spread widely, it stirred the literary imagination to its depths; it had a far larger result in literature. The reason was that it was less of a reaction from the positive spirit of the period than of an adaptation of it to idealistic purposes. It seized upon the facts of religion and the world and spiritualised them by interpretation; it took the religious doubt that was in the very air of the time and gave it consolation and rest in broader solutions of religious problems and loftier moral aims. It used and tinged the ideas of culture more and spread farther outside the church than within it. Large sections of thoughtful men and women who had become dis-churched drew towards religion again, and read with avidity not only the discourses and productions of the Broad Church, but the more secular appeals of men like Emerson, Martineau, Carlyle, and Ruskin.

## Section 10.

1. But it was by a more indirect way that the progress in science influenced the great bulk of the new audience. The popular mind seldom troubles itself about the spiritual meaning of a new discovery or movement. At its first approach to literary culture it is not sensitive to subtle influences from spheres outside of religious feeling. And hence the speculations of biology or the discoveries of astronomy or geology did not perturb it at first. It was through the practical applications of science that it felt the influences of the new stir of thought. The triumphs of physics and chemistry and engineering and the mechanical inventions that aided them or followed from them appealed to it at once in a striking way. It did not need much

imagination to appreciate the wonders of the new applications of steam or electricity or chemical analysis. And the popular audience was stirred to new emotional and intellectual life by them.

2. The indirect effect was still greater. Life became a swifter current both in country and city through the acceleration and cheapening of traffic and industry. And the torrent-like rush was not confined to the daily routine and external work. The mind was involved in the bustle of production and conquest. And it was the feverish quality of the new life that quickened the pulse of popular literature. Throughout the period the eagerness for news grew and spread, and developed newspapers at a rate that is surpassed only by that of the latter half of the century. And the passion for novelty drew writers into new spheres and types of literature. It was, therefore, a period of surprises both in poetry and prose. Some new poet or novelist or essayist was ever gratifying the passionate desire for something new. Some striking book was ever issuing from the press. And the press itself acquired accelerated speed in its work of publication. The annual issue of books increased in an exceptional way. And authors like Scott who had caught the ear of the new audience could make or retrieve fortunes in a few years by their literary labours. An exceptional or highly cultured note that took long to reach the mind of the people had to wait for its lucrative audience. Literature, especially popular literature, became tainted with the commercial spirit and publishers became wealthy and speculative. Books that would mediate between scientific thought or philosophy or culture and the people grew rapidly in number—what were called popular books. They were the more permanent counterpart of popular lectures, which sprang into being with the establishment of Mechanics' Institutes not long before the Reform Bill. Circulating libraries had become a common feature of provincial towns by the beginning of the century: but they appealed more to the new leisured class that had risen to comfort or wealth with the expansion of enterprise. A still wider audience was found for literature as soon as the burden of the long French wars was removed from

commerce and industry and the new applications of science and invention were allowed full scope in a demand for the concentration of artisans in towns. The minds of workmen were set free on the one hand from the stagnation of country life or on the other from the struggle for mere existence. The new masters, the new middle class, in many cases, were stirred by the spirit of philanthropy, and tried to organise elevating pursuits for the leisure of their factory hands. The Mechanics' Institute with its library, its reading-room filled with newspapers and magazines, and its courses of lectures and educative classes, was the form that had most permanent effect. It was thus that Scott's novels and Byron's poems found their way into every cottage in Britain; it was thus that so Europeanised a cynic as Byron came to condescend to simple untainted narratives in verse and to Hebrew melodies; it was thus that series of brief knowledge books became the order of the day. For the first time English literature in the sense of printed books may be said to belong to the whole people. And the wider the audience grew and the cheaper that steam and machinery and the organisation of industry made books, the more the literature came to be a possession of the people as a whole. There were still, of course, literatures of narrow circles; but they were more and more interpreted and influenced by the spirit of the intermediate literary world that stood between them and what corresponded to the old chap-book hawked through the streets and country districts.

## Section II.

**1.** As the period went on, the novel gradually mastered and absorbed this mediating realm. The essay and the knowledge-manual threatened for a time to act as the chief intermediaries. But as the novel adapted itself to different purposes and spheres and showed itself to be the most plastic of educators, it became supreme in national literature. Had any man a new gospel to preach, political, social, or religious, he found his largest and most attentive audience from this pulpit. His lessons sank impalpably into the popular mind. As the primitive instinct for narrative was stirred and

satisfied, the thoughts and feelings remained quiescent in its presence ; they took whatever colour the writer chose. Narrative had been the oldest method of unwritten literature for impressing or moulding the national consciousness ; it was the newest method of written literature. Poetry gave up its primitive universality of power ; for now, that reading had spread so widely, literature addressed the mind through the eye and not through the ear. The drama, that had taken the place of poetry as the national literature in the first strong civilisations after the arts of spectacle were developed, had prepared the way for this new form by addressing both eye and ear. Printing first threatened the empire of poetry and the drama by spreading copies of books widely. The industrial era with its cheapening of all processes, its urbanising of intelligence, and its spread of education completed the revolution, and made it clear that the literary form that was to have the widest audience must address it through the eyes alone, through books. Poetry can never regain its empire over the universal audience ; for to the popular section of it an art that still retains the forms and attractions of a literature for recitation appears artificial upon paper ; the brief lyric that can be wedded to popular music and pass from lip to lip is the only poetic type that can appeal to all sections untrained as well as trained. The drama, again, needs a stage and elaborate subsidiary arts, and at best can gather only a few thousands in its theatres. It will never hold its own against a literary form that can pass into every household.

**2.** The modern novel is the attempt to amalgamate the essential attractions of these two primitive types, the appeal of the one to the emotions and to the love of romance, and the power of the other to concentrate life and the striking situations of life and place them before the imagination. Its description and analysis and teaching function come from poetry ; its plot and dénouement, its scenic arrangement and dialogue come from the drama. It gratifies two primitive and almost universal passions, the love of story and the love of striking scene. Hence its growing absorption of the talent of our period. Hence its use as a pulpiteering medium. Every movement, political, social,

religious, philosophical, has found its most effective utterance through it.

3. And this was a period of great movements, just as the previous period was one of great individualities. The great men of last century vanished or sank into insignificance before the middle of the second decade of ours. Revolution had drawn forth European genius to meet it in politics and war. But once it had culminated and passed, literature and thought claimed the best talent, and the revolutionary harvest had to be reaped in the form of the theories held by numbers with such passion as ever and again to threaten new but scattered attempts at revolution. In religion the mediaeval and the rationalistic movements rent the church ; in politics the Reform Bill, the anti-slavery agitation, and the demand for the repeal of the Corn Laws made party feeling almost volcanic ; in the economic world the swift development of industrialism, the rage against the introduction of new machinery, the fluctuations of wealth and poverty, the strikes and riots, the famines and threats of famine kept thought in perpetual ferment ; socialism first appeared in the schemes of St. Simon, Fourier, and Owen ; science overturned all the traditional bases of belief ; wild patriotism and the most unscrupulous tyranny existed side by side ; passion made all antagonisms fierce ; even the meditative calm of philosophy was disturbed, torn as it was into the opposing camps of optimism and pessimism, the positive attitude and the idealist. And imaginative literature was deeply affected by all these movements and phases of thought and life. It is more sensitive than even religion to the atmospheric phenomena of the national mind. Poetry, the drama, and fiction stir to every wind of thought or feeling.

4. But of all, poetry, as the older and as the product chiefly of the emotional side of man, comes first in sensitiveness ; it is the first literary form to feel an approaching change. Next comes the drama in antiquity of origin and instability of equilibrium before national movements ; it echoes all the social and political cries. The novel, as last developed, as appealing to a far more varied audience, and as more deliberately written, was during the era least subject

of the three to new gusts of passion or new phases of thought. This is the natural order in which they should be treated in the history of literature—poetry, drama, fiction. And after them comes the literature of pure thought and pure fact, of observation and investigation, of knowledge and speculation.

## CHAPTER IV.

### English Poetry of the Period of Preparation.

### 1750–1800

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### Section 1.

1. There is a natural conservatism in minor poetry that makes much of one period seem but an echo of the last. It clings to the forms if not to the spirit of the past. Nor will it relinquish its models unless some striking genius arises and masters the younger poets by the attraction of his melody or greatness of his thought.

2. And in English poetry of this period no masterful individuality appeared. Burns, the only approach to it, was imprisoned within a dialect and could not reach the general current of English poetry, although we have one evidence of his immediate influence in a copy of his poems that belonged to Cowper, liberally marked and underlined by that poet and bearing the date 1787. Chatterton died a mere boy. Blake gave his power to pseudo-prophecy and art. And Wordsworth and Coleridge only touch the rim of the century with their first poetic efforts. There was no great force of character in the poetry of the period to mould it to new purposes. There was a complete absence of great creative power or seer-like inspiration. All the poetry that appeared was a poetry of tendencies rather than of fruition. The greatest energies of the time were drawn off into the political sphere.

3. The first tendency we should expect to find is an imitation of Pope, conscious or unconscious. He was the great poet of the Queen Anne period and his last triumphs fall as late as 1744. Whilst the great edition of his works by Warburton appeared in 1751. It was the most natural

thing in the world that he should have disciples in the third quarter of the century if not in the fourth.

4. Samuel Johnson, the sturdy, autocratic adherent of the immediate past, comes first. His youth and earliest literary ambitions fell in the period of Pope's greatest influence and fame. And with all his respect for the genius of Dryden, he never could rid himself of the yoke of the great artist of versified epigram. His Lives of the Poets, written in the last quarter of the century and marked by the presence of the new movement in prose, is still dominated by the poetic ideals that Pope had consecrated by his work. Strong though his character was, he had to view English poetry through the medium of these. So masterful indeed were they that he allowed the publishers of the collection of the poets that he edited to exclude Chaucer and Spenser and Shakespeare from it and condemned as unpoetic some of the most beautiful poems of Milton like Lycidas. His own satires in verse, imitations though they were of Juvenal and inspired by the gloomiest pessimism, are echoes of the satiric optimist whose Essay on Criticism, Rape of the Lock, and translation of the Iliad he so much admired And his feeling that poetry after Pope "could no farther go" grew upon him so that after the middle of the century he practically abandoned the pursuit; his only attempts after this were his prologues and his lines On the Death of Dr. Robert Levett. This last written in 1782 shows in its form the influence of the new time; though composed in his dignified, moralising vein and with his usual sonorous eloquence, it adopts the brief ballad stanza of four octosyllabic lines with alternating rhymes; the heroic couplet of his master was abandoned for the first time.

5. In his London (1738), Vanity of Human Wishes (1749), Prologue to Comus, at its production for the benefit of a granddaughter of Milton (1750), Prologue to Goldsmith's Goodnatured Man (1769), and Prologue to A Word to the Wise (1777), he is emulating the epigrammatic terseness, the balanced rhetoric, the antithetic moralising of Pope. He adds a certain elephantine dignity of his own to the expression, a dignity, that belonged to his nature, but was confirmed by his employment in oratorising notes of

the discussions in parliament for The Gentleman's Magazine in his Reports of the Debates of the Senate of Lilliput. Most of his poems were written whilst he was busy at this, and they bear the marks; though they also reveal the wealth of vigorous Saxon phrase that he had at command. Their pith often lies in a line or phrase of Latinised eloquence followed by one of vigorous conversational English. There are not many couplets all stiff rhetorical brocade like these from The Vanity of Human Wishes;—

> "Let observation, with extensive view,
> Survey mankind from China to Peru."
> "Impeachment stops the speaker's powerful breath,
> And restless fire precipitates on death."

There are more like these;—

> "This mournful truth is everywhere confessed,
> Slow rises worth by poverty depressed." *(London)*
> "He left the name at which the world grew pale
> To point a moral or adorn a tale." *(Vanity of Human Wishes)*
> "Safe in his power, whose eyes discern afar
> The secret ambush of a specious prayer." *(Vanity &c.)*
> "Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
> And panting time toiled after him in vain."
> *(Prologue at Drury Lane)*

His Prologue at the Opening of Drury Lane versifies literary history and is quite in the style of the Queen Anne period and the Essay on Criticism in particular. But he exalts Shakespeare, and decries the Restoration drama, in which "declamation roared while passion slept."

6. His other prologues reveal his manly and independent and yet sympathetic nature. In them he tutors the theatrical audiences or chides them for their bad taste or heartless conduct. He was as fearless of their frown as of Chesterfield's, and helped more than any man to give an upright attitude to literature and to abolish the influence of patronage. Coming from the provinces and the middle classes as he did, he expressed their growing confidence in their judgments and standards as against those of the city and aristocratic circles. Even when most imitative of the Queen Anne poetry in form, he anticipated the new age by his embodiment of middle class feelings and morality. He had no sympathy with the shallow optimism of Pope and Shaftesbury, or with the fashionable cynicism

of their time, that treated with levity the old-fashioned virtues and the practical piety of the quiet average Englishman. It was only in politics that he was opposed to the new middle class; he hated their Puritan ancestors and Cromwell and was almost a Jacobite in his unreasoning devotion to absolute monarchy. In his two satires he retails the new commonplaces, that, whilst pious in tone and distrustful of rationalism, were real symptoms of the coming revolution. In his London he is almost as passionate as Rousseau against the evils and vices of advanced and centralised society, as fierce as the most fervent socialist against the injustice to poverty and the lust for gold, as strong in his hatred of oppression as Shelley, whilst he has none of their impieties and rests in the guiding hand of Heaven.

> "Grant me, kind Heaven, to find some happier place
> Where honesty and sense owe no disgrace."
> "Here let those reign whom pensions can incite
> To vote a patriot black, a courtier white."
> "All crimes are safe but hated poverty."
> "—here, where all are slaves to gold,
> Where looks are merchandise and smiles are sold."
> "Quick let us rise, the happy seats explore,
> And bear oppression's insolence no more."

In The Vanity of Human Wishes he is happier in spirit, and farther removed from the bitterness of personal illustration, that he learned from Pope; yet he is still the middle class moralist of last century, who finds the whole world dark but for the light from faith in Heaven. He is even farther from the attitude of the Queen Anne period virtuoso who could sneer at the virtues as well as the vices of his neighbours and yet hold that "whatever is, is best." He has the recoil from cities and city life that was coming into vogue with the growing wealth of the provinces and was about to bring back poetry to nature and simplicity. He mourns over the havoc that the desire for gold, the taste for luxury, and the pride of ambition work in human existence; and paints at length the fall of Wolsey and the end of Charles the Twelfth of Sweden. The humble have the best of it; "How much more safe the vassal than the lord!" Yet over unambitious life there is the shadow;

> "Our supple tribes repress their patriot throats,
> And ask no questions but the price of votes;
> With weekly libels and septennial ale,
> Their wish is full to riot and to rail."

Misfortune, sorrow, and death dog the footsteps of the lowliest. The best, outlive their time; "Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage." There is no hope but in Heaven for "helpless man," who, without its aid, must "roll darkling down the torrent of his fate." This was the philosophy that had consoled the silenced Puritans during their exclusion from all public life and was now spreading, through evangelicalism, methodism, and philanthropy, upwards into literature. Johnson had the cue from Juvenal, he had the spirit from the surroundings of his boyhood and youth at Lichfield.

## Section 2.

1. His true poetical successor was Oliver Goldsmith. He brought with him from his father's humble parsonage in Ireland into the dark turmoil of the city that love of simplicity and home which was to be one of the freshest notes of literature. His poetry has the same mingling of old echoes and new tones, of conservatism of form and revolutionism of feeling. Long before he knew Johnson, when he was loitering in 1755-56 "by the lazy Scheldt or wandering Po", he had adopted the heroic couplet for the first sketch of his Traveller, and after he had corrected and revised and polished, as his master, Pope, had ever done, he published the poem in 1764, Popian in form, romantic in spirit. In it he takes a text, like Pope and Johnson, and enforces its lessons in a series of balanced paragraphs leading on to a brilliant peroration; he is as deeply imbued with the methods of pulpit eloquence as they; he varies the didactic with the descriptive, the abstract lesson with the example; he makes his couplets move in the same serried array; he even adopts at times the rare Latinised word or phrase as in "Woods over woods in gay theatric pride," "While sea-born gales their gelid wings expand," "No vernal bloom their torpid rocks array," "The gay grandsire skilled in gestic lore," and

> "Seen opulence, her grandeur to maintain,
> Lead stern depopulation in her train."

But here the likeness to Pope ends; he proceeds much further than Johnson in the direction that was to lead to the overthrow of the Queen Anne empire in literature. Johnson had substituted for the personal and contemporary portraits, with which he had learned from Pope to point his satire, characters like Wolsey famous in history. Goldsmith dismissed portraiture and put in its place landscape or picture of national or local type. With Johnson too he rejected the satire of scorn and adopted that of pity or of indignation. He had an eye for the sorrows of men rather than for their weaknesses and vices. Sympathy wings any approach he makes to epigram, and not contempt. His well-polished couplets, much as in rhythm they resemble Pope's, are a complete contrast to them in spirit. Tenderness for the lowly and oppressed, love of the poor, worship of simplicity reign supreme. Rousseau's gospel of the return to the happiness of nature is preached with picturesque eloquence. The new philanthropy is already full-fledged in his two longer poems. His real poetic genius led him to abandon the Queen Anne method of epigrammatic attack on city vices, and to paint instead their melancholy results in national character and rustic life. There is in his Traveller and his Deserted Village the true pastoral beauty mingled with that indignant sorrow over the woes of civilisation which is the raw material of revolutionism and socialism.

**2.** He is, therefore, even more truly than Johnson a precursor of the new era. For he had no strong political prejudices to interfere with his middle class sympathies. His only strong prejudice was the economic fallacy that wealth destroys all virtue and pure happiness, and leads to desolation in rural districts. And this was the basis of that romantic sentiment which was about to take possession of English literature. The new leisured middle class saw, as Rousseau saw in France, much to deplore in the actual condition of men, and particularly the poor, and turned back for the ideal state of life to an older world, whose harsh features had been softened into enchantment by

distance. Both his long poems regret a past that is fast vanishing with human happiness.

3. In "The Traveller or Prospect of Society" he makes a survey of the parts of Europe he has visited, Italy, Switzerland, France, Holland, Britain, and after picturing the fair side of each nation he turns to the reverse and mourns over the vices and the outlook. In Italy he sees everything that can please the senses; "but small the bliss that sense alone bestows"; "Man seems the only growth that dwindles here"; he is luxurious, vain, trifling, untrue.

> "All evils here contaminate the mind,
> That opulence departed leaves behind".

The Swiss are a "nobler race", uncursed by the presence of palace or "costly lord". The peasant fears no such contrast;

> "Cheerful at morn he wakes from short repose,
> Breasts the keen air, and carols as he goes".
> "At night returning, every labour sped,
> He sits him down, the monarch of a shed".

The rough voices of nature make him the better patriot, as "scaring sounds" make the child cling "closer to the mother's breast". But he is boorish, tied to a narrow round of life, heedless of all those larger pleasures that culture gives, unrefined in morals, unprogressive. France has gentler manners, "gay, sprightly land of mirth and social ease", "idly busy, rolls her world away". But all her people are too fond of praise, "nor weigh the solid worth of self-applause"; ostentation, vanity, and other follies result.

> "For praise too dearly loved or warmly sought
> Enfeebles all internal strength of thought."

Holland and her victory over the ocean next occupies his page, with

> "The slow canal, the yellow-blossomed vale,
> The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail".

But view the Dutch closer,

> "craft and fraud appear,
> Even liberty itself is bartered here";

it is "a land of tyrants and a den of slaves";

> "Heavens! How unlike their Belgic sires of old,
> Rough, poor, content, ungovernably bold".

Patriotism brings him to his own countrymen,

"Pride in their port, defiance in their eye".

But Britons prize independence too highly;

"Ferments arise, imprisoned factions roar".

Here alone does the Johnsonian conservatism appear. He girds against the wealth that industrialism was beginning to clot and mingles the reactionary politics he took from his friend with the natural Rousseau-like regret for a past golden age.

"As nature's ties decay,
As duty, love, and honour fail to sway,
Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and law,
Still gather strength and force unwilling awe".

He illogically charges this with the neglect of ability; "talent sinks";

"Till time may come, when, stripped of all her charms,
The land of scholars and the nurse of arms,
One sink of level avarice shall lie,
And scholars, soldiers, kings, unhonoured die".

Yet, like Johnson too, he would not "flatter kings or court the great". And he works in the favourite constitutionalism of the time that in Delolme and Burke showed the English government to be perfection as the embodiment of the balance of power and the harmony of all parts;

"Those that think must govern those that toil";

but "Should one order disproportioned grow,
Its double weight must ruin all below".
"Oh then, how blind to all that truth requires,
Who think it freedom when a part aspires".

He indignantly protests against the attempt of the rich oligarchs of the upper classes to absorb all power;

"Laws grind the poor and rich men rule the law".

He anticipates the anti-slavery agitation of the next half century, and the democratic spirit of our era, in his passion against wealth "pillaged from slaves to purchase slaves at home". He ends, with some inconsistency, in the Johnsonian absolutism;

"I fly from petty tyrants to the throne".

And he evidently thinks that it was the Puritan revolution, striking "at regal power", that "gave wealth to sway the mind with double force". From this reactionary lesson, that he

had so ill learned from his dogmatic friend, he passes into a more natural lament over the desertion of rural districts and hamlets, and anticipates his Deserted Village. The centralisation of the people for industrial purposes had already begun, and emigration to America helped to depopulate the country, and let "the smiling, long-frequented village fall". He closes with the sentiment, which was all around him and in his own heart, distrust in legislative panaceas; "our own felicity we make or find". The introduction written before he knew Johnson expresses feelings far more natural to his emotional nature and his middle class sympathies than this fiery polemic against the new plutocracy and in favour of absolutism. In consequence it is simpler and truer poetry. His "heart untravelled fondly turns" to his brother, and his native place, and the hospitable parsonage, "where all the ruddy family" "learn the luxury of doing good". He catches the glow of the rising philanthropy, which was soon to overleap all barriers of race and climate;

> "Wiser he whose sympathetic mind
> Exults in all the good of all mankind."
> "Creation's heir, the world, the world is mine".

And yet he pines with all the passion of the English peasantry and middle class for his own hearth, for some spot—

> "Where my worn soul, each wandering hope at rest,
> May gather bliss to see my fellows blest".
> "His first best country ever is at home".

4. It was this love of home that was one of the distinctive notes of the new audience of literature as against the upper classes, who still, as in the Queen Anne period, left their country seats and flitted about London and the court. And it was this that made The Traveller the first great popular success of the era; it became an English household book like the Pilgrim's Progress. For it expressed, in language that was, on the whole, simple, one of the fundamental emotions of the new audience. And it was as natural to the author as to those whom he addressed.

5. Hence he turned for his second love-task to another phase of the same theme and wrote his Deserted Village. In it he throws the new romantic sentiment round rustic life; and, as he lived in narrow city streets or lanes during the half dozen years that he spent on it, the lament over its

decay grows almost artificial in its pastoral intensity from the contrast. The poem bears the marks of the distractions of his London life and is far less of a unity than his first. Yet, when published in 1770, four years before his death, it won immediate and widespread popularity, and raised him to the zenith of his fame. It chimed with that love of nature and simple, primitive life, which in England was about to cancel the long divorce between the literature and the people; and it anticipated the romantic movement by its poetry of reminiscence and regret. It had little of the rhetorical eloquence of The Traveller and none of its political diatribes; and, in spite of the economic fallacy that ran through it, it became far more popular, because of its greater melody, the pastoral beauty of its pictures, the more natural flow of its emotions, and the essential simplicity of its art. Many poems have given more phrases and lines to the English language; none have fixed in the national consciousness so many passages, pictures, and character-sketches.

6. The very name of the village, "Sweet Auburn", has almost become proverbial in English. It is neither English nor Irish; it is the ideal village of middle class sentiment, in both its happy and its ruined state. The descendants of the Puritans still cherished the memory of the exodus of their American relations for the sake of their religion; and the romance and the terrors of the English world across the great sea were revived amongst them by the visits of their preachers Whitefield and Wesley. Oppression or failure of employment still kept up the stream of emigration. Hence the almost religious feeling that lingered round a ruined cottage or homestead or an abandoned hamlet. Nor did they strictly distinguish between the effect of colonisation and that of the new emigration from the country to industrial centres. All alike formed the natural fountain of the poetry of regret amongst the rapidly expanding audience of literature. With Goldsmith it was almost instinctive to choose the theme. He was a being wholly of sentiment, and he never lost touch with the middle class life of his own family. Hence the naturalness of the expression, in spite of its Queen Anne echoes; and hence the great popularity

of the poem, in spite of the departure of the theme from all the traditions of London critics.

7. And its fundamental fallacy that wealth was the ruin of all that was simple and great in a nation must have been a widespread sentiment throughout Britain; else Adam Smith would not have put such vigour into the refutation of it and into the elucidation of the laws that guide national prosperity. It is significant that The Wealth of Nations appeared in 1776, six years after the publication of The Deserted Village. Something rational was needed to stem the current of popular antagonism to the new industrial development now made so romantic by this sweet-natured poet of memory. And such a melodious work of art was then stronger than a dozen of the most persuasive and lucid treatises on political economy. Lines like these sang in the ear like lyrics:

> "And parting Summer's lingering blooms delayed";
> "Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
> The hollow-sounding bittern guards his nest;
> Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies."
> "No busy steps the grass-grown foot-way tread;
> For all the bloomy flush of life is fled."

And the pictures of "innocence and ease", of "humble happiness", were exactly those that would appeal to the hearts of rustics cooped up in factories and cities with the memory of the life they had left all idealised; to them the omission of the sordid details, the narrow routine, the hard struggle with poverty, the coarse ignorance, the often brutal jealousies and envies, and the injustice of village gossip, would seem anything but unnatural. Memory is the boldest magician; and this poem brought it into full play and expressed their best ideals:—

> "Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
> Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain."
> "I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
> Here to return—and die at home at last."

And the half-humourous, half-pathetic portraits of the village preacher, "passing rich with forty pounds a year," the beggar, the broken soldier, "shouldering his crutch and showing how fields were won," the schoolmaster whose "one small head could carry all he knew," would please the longings of the urbanised rustics for their old life. So too

would the series of vivid sketches of scenes, often Teniers-like in their faithfulness, and yet ever idealised; "the hawthorn bush with seats beneath the shade," the sports and dancing in the twilight, the kindly parson as "he watched and wept," "prayed and felt for all," "allured to brighter worlds and led the way," making "fools who came to scoff, remain to pray," smiling over his flock as he saw them at work or leisure, the village school with its humours and terrors, the bout at argument between the parson and the master, the village alehouse with its "varnished clock," that "clicked behind the door," and its "village statesmen talking with looks profound," the farmer telling his news, the barber his tale, the woodman singing his ballad, the smith clearing his dusky brow, and the coy maid "kissing the cup to pass it to the rest."

8. No wonder that the poem went straight to the heart of the emigrant yeomen and artisans in the great centres. And its philosophy harmonised with the latent socialism of men who saw members of their class rise to great wealth, and wealth develop into extravagant luxury, and the latent democracy of men who were soon to sympathise with the struggle of their brethren in America for freedom. It sank into their hearts strengthened by the revolutionism of the time.

> "Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
> And desolation saddens all thy green".
> "Princes and lords may flourish and may fade;
> A breath can make them as a breath has made.
> But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
> When once destroyed, can never be supplied".
> "For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
> Explore the mine or tempt the dangerous deep".
> "Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power,
> By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour".

It mattered not that the basis of his sentiment was a mistake of fact; wealth was accumulating, it was true; but men were not decaying; they were only shifting the scene of their labours from agriculture to manufactures, from country to town, and were thus progressing towards greater intelligence and greater knowledge; and but for the great wars of the period, recklessly undertaken by the government, their grow thin numbers, and in prosperity or real value of wages,

would have struck even a sentimentalist who romanced about the past.

**9.** He defends the mistake and the consequent fallacy in his prose dedication to Sir Joshua Reynolds. He says he has made excursions into the country for four or five years and made inquiries. And he professes that his theory about the destructive effects of luxury will be met with "the shout of modern politicians", as it has been "the fashion", "for twenty or thirty years past", "to consider luxury as one of the greatest national advantages". He holds with "the wisdom of antiquity". He seems quite unconscious that he is really expressing the Puritan feeling of the new middle classes, and the revolutionary feeling of the new European times that was to culminate twenty years after in the overthrow of both monarchic and aristocratic luxury in France. He was really interpreting the voice of the new audience of literature, as against London society.

**10.** His protest against dedications points in the same direction. English literature was in the throes of rejecting patronage and he was doing his best for the revolution. "The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most men. He is since dead." And the dedication he refers to is quite as manly as this, and as revolutionary in literary doctrines. He refers to the decay of poetry, and to the favour shown by "the powerful" to her new rivals, painting and music. Nor does he regret the disappearance of patronage. He mourns as as much over "the mistaken efforts of the learned to improve poetry". "What criticisms have we not heard of late in favour of blank verse, and Pindaric Odes, choruses, anapaests, and iambics, alliterative care, and happy negligence!" In short he will have nothing to do with the school of Gray and Collins or that of Akenside. He feels, though he does not say so, that it will never suit the more natural tastes of the new audience. So does he condemn, but with more vehemence, the satiric school that indulged in party distortion and calumny. This manifestly refers to Churchill and his disciples, though they were only carrying out one tradition of the age of Pope and Swift, which he too followed. "Some half-witted thing, who waits to be thought

a bold man, having lost the character of a wise one", "they dignify with the name of poet; his tawdry lampoons are called satires; his turbulence is said to be force and his phrenzy fire."

**11.** When he departed from his own special poetic line, it was either to join the new ballad school, or the school of humourous society verses, that belongs to every highly artificial social organisation. His verses to suit occasions were often happy; and none of them ever approached to ill-nature; they were the outcome of his lighter moods, not only witty in themselves, but "the cause that wit was in others." His best were "The Haunch of Venison, a Poetical Epistle to Lord Clare," written in 1771, and Retaliation, written in 1774, to take humourous revenge on some friends who had in his absence composed epitaphs upon him at St. James's Coffee House, where they often met; the best was Garrick's;

> "Here lies Poet Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll,
> Who wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Poll."

Goldsmith's epitaph on the great actor in reply was also the best and keenest-edged in the poem;—

> "On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting;
> 'Twas only that when he was off he was acting.
> Of praise a mere glutton, he swallowed what came,
> And the puff of a dunce he mistook it for fame."

These were the sharpest thrusts; all else was the acknowledgment of his great talents. His character-sketch of Burke is quite as good, and, though the orator had the best of his career to pass through, nothing equals it in truth;

> "Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
> And thought of convincing while they thought of dining."
> "Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit."
> "Too fond of the right to pursue the expedient."
> "Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
> And to party gave up what was meant for mankind."

One of the most striking things about Goldsmith's genius was its surprises; he "talked like poor Poll," and blundered through life, and yet no man of his time has survived his age so well; his best productions are evergreen in their attractions; in society he was ever so busy rescuing himself from the jests at his expense and from his own clumsiness

that he seemed incapable of observation; yet no man of his circle had so keen an eye for the foibles of human nature; he could not fail to be a successful dramatist or novelist, to judge by this character-poem. The other "The Haunch of Venison" is more dramatic; but it is slighter and has no epigram in it. His prologues and epilogues are nearly all in heroic couplet and semi-dramatic in spirit; one, an Intended Epilogue to She Stoops to Conquer is dramatic or rather operatic in form. Twice he was employed to write libretto for music, and on each occasion he reached only an average success; his "Threnodia Augustalis, Sacred to the Memory of her Royal Highness the Princess Dowager of Wales" was written, or rather compiled, he says, in two days and had too solemn a theme to suit him; the lyrics are abortive attempts at hymns, and in his recitative he once or twice resorts to the blank verse to which he so objected. His Oratorio (1764), though it has a theme, the Captivity in Babylon, that might have given scope to his never-dying love of home, is in the same style, and not much better; he was too far removed from the genius of Milton to manage a religious topic that demanded sublimity. Two or three imitations of Swift's octosyllabic humour have themes and treatment much more to his taste. His epitaphs are too solemn to be successful. His best short pieces are an anticipation of the style of Hood with a clever instance of intentional bathos in every verse; they were An Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog (in the Vicar of Wakefield), and An Elegy on that Glory of her Sex, Mrs. Mary Blaize; a stanza from each will illustrate;

> "But soon a wonder came to light,
> That showed the rogues they lied;
> The man recovered of the bite,
> The dog it was that died."

> "But now her wealth and finery fled,
> Her hangers-on cut short all.
> The doctors found, when she was dead,
> Her last disorder mortal."

Had Goldsmith been less of a butt in private life, and fallen upon a period of comic periodicals, he would have developed more into a versifying punster.

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**12.** It was a happy thing for literature that he did not; his bright humour and goodhumour served better to set off the romance and sentiment that he drew from the new currents of his age. There is none of it to relieve the love-story of his one ballad "Edwin and Angelina," which he wrote in 1764, and inserted in his Vicar of Wakefield (1766), under the title of The Hermit, putting it into the mouth of the baronet disguised as Mr. Burchill, who recites it to the impoverished but happy family of the vicar as an appeal to Sophia's love and romantic feeling. His friend Percy, afterwards bishop, was just about to publish his famous Reliques of Ancient Poetry (1765), and was collecting and collating for the book. Goldsmith at once felt the true poetry of these products of the popular genius, and knew that nothing would so appeal to the heart of the new audience; he had never forgotten the folk-lyrics of his boyhood, and Peggy Golden's singing of "Johnny Armstrong's Good-night" on the hearth at dear Lissoy. And his instincts told him that the people, with passion for the romance and sentiment of love, were about to take possession of English literature again. Hence his Edwin and Angelina, with its story of the rejected lover turning hermit and having to entertain in his cell his repentant mistress wandering disguised as a youth, has become to modern sentiment and burlesque the typical expression of amorous romance. He had to write to the St. James' Chronicle in June 1767 to refute the charge of plagiarism or imitation, and to explain that his ballad was shown to Percy before the latter "formed the fragments of Shakespeare" into his "Friar of Orders Grey.

## Section 3.

**1.** But this is isolated and is significant only as connecting him with the new popular movement in poetry. It was by his Traveller and Deserted Village that he affected the current of English poetry. Crabbe, his lineal descendant, was sixteen years old and already ambitious in verse when the latter first ran through so many editions in 1770. His first poem, Inebriety, published at Ipswich in 1775, shows more study of Pope than of Goldsmith in its rhythm, style,

and diction. But its strong realistic portraits of the various types of the drinkers of last century have their art from his contemporary, and make the pompous Queen-Anne verse in which they appear sound like a burlesque of Pope; verses like these have almost a mocking echo of the great epigrammatist in them :—

"Champagne the courtier drinks, the spleen to chase,
The colonel burgundy, and port his grace."
"O'er hills and vales the jovial savage reels,
Fire in his head and frenzy at his heels;
From path direct the bending hero swerves,
And shapes his way in ill-proportioned curves".
"Go wiser thou! and in thy scale of taste,
Weigh gout and gravel against ale and rest;
Laugh at poor sots with insolent pretence,
Yet cry, when tortured, where is Providence?"
"The frantic soul bright reason's path defies,
Now creeps on earth, now triumphs in the skies;
Swims in the seas of error, and explores,
Through midnight mists, the fluctuating shores."
"Old Torpio nods and as the laugh goes round
Grunts through the nasal duct and joins the sound."
"Learn'd but not wise, and without virtue brave,
A gay, deluding, philosophic knave."

"Pope in worsted stockings" was no random epithet of Horace Smith's for the man who could write such couplets. The "worsted stockings" came, partly from Goldsmith, partly from his own surroundings. At twenty years of age he never could have had the confidence to choose such themes for poetry, had The Deserted Village not pointed the way. And through his earlier poems at least there are numerous echoes of lines from that and The Traveller, as, for example, in the First Book of The Village;—

"Who only skilled to take the finny tribe
The yearly dinner or septennial bribe."

He had been brought up by his father on Milton and Young; but there is not a trace of the rhythm or style of either; he rejected blank verse and never departed from the heroic couplet, as modelled by Pope and modified by Johnson and Goldsmith, except in four brief and by no means successful poems written in 1807. And his style is completely formed in this his earliest attempt; it has the didactic purpose, the descriptive method, and the earnestly satiric touch; it aims at the full-length portrait, and the

rhetorical balance and rise of the period and paragraph; and it never shrinks from any details of rustic life as too low for poetry. What is new is the microscopic observation of both nature and human nature, and the almost scientific love of fact. His early profession, that of a surgeon, seems to have bent his mind almost morbidly in the direction of watching the most repulsive details of life as symptoms of disease, even when he had no remedy. And his sympathy with the growing sciences, his interest, first in botany, and afterwards in geology, kept alive his faculty of minute observation, when he had entered the church. His mental constitution indeed was scientific rather than artistic; he had little faculty of selection, no special instinct for beauty; fidelity to fact was his ruling passion; his pictures were almost photographs, and the framework of his poems almost classifications; only his strong middle class feelings and his stoical ethics kept him from anticipating the coarse realism of the latest fiction. As it is, his poetry is as documentary, as scientifically faithful to fact, as any Zolaesque novel. But Balzac and Zola and Taine would have shuddered at the simplicity and openness of his morals. He could never refrain from preaching, the surest mark in the literature of last century of an author or book coming from or appealing to the middle class, even though he hated all dissent and the efforts of Wesley and Whitefield. Every poem is as naked and commonplace in its ethics as a copy-book heading. And yet it is the inner and spiritual results of crime or vice that he paints with most tragic pathos.

2. We can see that he is far closer to the heart of the middle class, far more representative of its real thoughts and feelings and modes of viewing life than Goldsmith. The romantic and sentimental fallacies never came between him and his theme. In his two excursions out of the provincialism of his class, the first when a youth in London he lived in Burke's house, and the second when he was chaplain to the Duke of Rutland, he seems to have wholly escaped the influence of these half-cultured moods. And yet there is no surer sign of the rising power of the middle class in literature than his poetry. The return to nature was nothing but the literary resurgence of the people

trained by their long intercourse with reality and by their direct struggle with the powers of nature. And he rejects more than any poet of the new time all the traditional methods of looking at man and his surroundings; he will have no illusions, no poetical glamour, such as even Goldsmith continued to throw around the peasant; the coarsest detail is as worthy of record and as true poetry as the greatest tragedy or deepest pathos. And it was this intrusion of the painful realities of provincial life upon the notice of the governing classes and of culture that formed the essence of English revolutionism in last century; conservative in all his feelings, unconscious of all the new movements, and completely eighteenth century in the performance of his clerical duties though he was, he did more than any literary man of his time for the new philanthropy, the revolt of England against old abuses, the return to nature. His faithful yet tragic pictures of the sorrows and wrongs of the provincial poor were worth a generation of blue-books and commissions.

3. In this, his first published poem, "Inebriety", he anticipates the best that has been said by temperance orators in the century between; and, more than a generation before the total abstinence movement began, in the very midst of the customs he paints, he describes their horrors with more tragic and humourous power than Gough. His pictures of the merry toper in the alehouse must have been studied by Burns for Tam o' Shanter;

> "O'er the dull embers happy Colin sits,
> Colin, the prince of joke and rural wits;
> Whilst the wind whistles through the hollow panes,
> He drinks, nor of the rude assault complains;
> And tells the tale from sire to son retold
> Of spirits vanishing near hidden gold".

The picture of the return of the jovial savage to his home, and of the after effects

> ("Intoxication flies as fury fled;
> On rooky pinions quits the aching head".),

the portrait of the

> "Easy chaplain of an atheist lord",

that of Fabricio who

> "Hates the bottle, yet but thinks it right
> To boast next day the honours of the night",

and that of the drinking vicar,

> "Whose various texts excite a loud applause
> Favouring the bottle and the good old cause",

are all Dutch in their minute fidelity to eighteenth century fact. There is no mistaking the individuality of the portraits or the widespread mischief of the custom.

> "Sots in embroidery and sots in crape
> Of every order, station, rank, and shape",

from "The king who nods upon his rattle throne", "the staggering peer", and "slow-tongued bishop" to "the humble pensioner and gownsman dry". And through it all runs a horror of the atheism and irreligion that were still fashionable in higher circles. He is quite pleased with the ale-drinking of the rustics who do not

> "In the pride of reason curse their God",

and shrinks from

> "The knaves who scoff",

from

> "The jest profane that mocks the offended God",

and from the witticisms at the expense of "holy writ". He satirises with most success the vicar at the table of the drinking rout;

> "Rather than hear his God blasphemed, he takes
> The last loved glass and then the board forsakes";
> "Vicars must with discretion go astray,
> Whilst bishops may be damned the nearest way".

There is a flavour of Hudibras in the satire. Nor do any of his later poems approach it in striving after epigram. The pseudo-classicism of the Queen Anne age appears in his adopting classical names for types, Curio, Flaminius, Milo, in his speaking of the morn as Lucina, and in addressing his muse. The influence of the new time makes him introduce a picture of winter in the second paragraph; his own lack of taste makes it stiff and artificial.

4. His next poem, The Candidate, was the first effort in London to test the opinion of the greater world of letters. He had given up the medical profession and determined to embark on the sea of literature. He sent it in 1780 to The Monthly Review with an introduction, and a prose address "to the reader". He says it is "addressed to the authors

of the Monthly Review, as to critics of acknowledged merit". It deserved the neglect it met. For, unlike his first, there are only poor echoes of Pope in it; it is full of personified abstractions, contains one of the feeblest and most transparent of allegorical dreams and has perpetual reference to his muses. And its whole purport is to express his ambition to be a poet, with the fear of "relentless critics and avenging wits" before his eyes. The only trace of his own individuality is in his resolve not to sing of kings and heroes but of Mira the name under which he addressed his future wife Miss Sarah Elmy.

5. In spite of the objection to patronage expressed in it, he was driven at last to try this old-fashioned refuge of the poet. He appealed to various noblemen without success; and at last in despair wrote to Burke. The struggling orator took the struggling poet into his house, and thence was issued The Library in June 1781. It is a thoroughly conventional poem of the school of Pope; the whole structure, the episodes, and even the lines are modelled on the Queen Anne poets. The only difference is in the subject and its treatment. All the didactic poems of the beginning of the century took the form of "arts", "Art of Criticism", "Art of Translation"; and these allowed of much smart satire on contemporary literature. After the death of Pope poetic didacticism became more prosaic; it chose subjects that admitted only of classificatory or philosophical treatment, The Pleasures of the Imagination, The Fleece, The Sugar Cane. The only relief to their dulness was the chance of picturesque description. The Library belongs to this type. It is irremediably dull. It describes the advantage of books, the arrangement of them in a library, the bindings, the various classes—divinity, philosophy, medicine, law, history, drama, romance, criticism. There is no opportunity for the picture or the portrait. The only breaks in the current of commonplace are the debate between a Rousseau-like poet who believes in a primitive age of happiness and the representative of common-sense and the philosophy of law, who is evidently Blackstone, the satiric picture of a typical scene of romance —the captive queen—and the conventional vision of the

genius of the library at the close. The theme itself shows how common a feature of life libraries were becoming and the growth of publication in numbers ("E'en light Voltaire is numbered through the town.") Its treatment shows that he was about to abandon medicine for divinity.

("Buried in dust and lost in silence dwell;
Most potent, grave, and reverend friends—farewell.")

His reference to the Duke of Rutland towards the end shows that he already had prospect of the chaplaincy which he afterwards obtained. He was licensed in August 1782, became curate of his native village of Aldborough, then domestic chaplain at Belvoir Castle; married in 1783 and took the rectorship of Strathern; passed from rectorship to rectorship till he finally settled at Trowbridge in 1813, where he died in 1832.

6. It was under the influence of Burke that he turned to his natural themes and sources of inspiration. Helped by the new patronage, his poem was welcomed by the critics, in spite of its dulness, and he gained confidence to describe what he knew and loved. He abandoned the guidance of Pope and the didactic school, and accepted Goldsmith again as his model. The Village, published in 1783, showed to the London world, as Inebriety might have done, if it had been read, that a new spirit had come into poetry, the spirit of realism. From its instant and great popularity, novelists, as well as poets, took heart of grace to look at nature and human nature through their own eyes and to give up the old medium of conventionalities and the new medium of sentiment. At the time of its publication, Burns was already in his twenty-fourth year and writing those lyrics and poems that were in 1786 and 1787 to astonish Scotland. Pope had somewhat tainted his peasant ambitions to paint the life around him; The Village made him stand by the natural expression of all the joys and sorrows, the sordidness as well as the nobility of rustic toil. Without Crabbe's rejection of the romance and sentiment, with which Goldsmith had misted over the life of the peasant, Burns might have maimed his faculty of seeing imaginatively the reality around him, and preferred to express second-hand sublimities in stilted verse.

7. There is in this poem wholesome, almost scientific, power of observing the world in all the nakedness of its struggle for existence. The poet has his Deserted Village at his elbow as he writes it, we can see; and he deliberately paints out all the rose colour, and leaves nothing but stern fact seen by a true, and not romantic, pessimist. He will have nothing to do with the unrealities of the pastoral, but give "the real pictures of the poor." It is his first master, Pope, that he is thinking of, when he refuses to give

> "Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song";

from truth and nature he will not "widely stray," as Virgil and his imitators did. He gives an often-quoted picture of the Suffolk coast,

> "Where the heath, with withering brake grown o'er,
> Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor,"

and

> "Poppies nodding mock the hope of toil."

He describes the poverty-stricken village with its "wild amphibious race," who

> "scowl at strangers with suspicious eye."
> "Where are the swains who, daily labour done,
> With rural games played down the setting sun?"

For Goldsmith's romantic picture he substitutes the smugglers running their pinnace on shore; for the simple life he finds "rapine, wrong and fear," and "a bold, artful, surly, savage race"; no "plenty smiles"; but a "famished land," is ever lessened by "the greedy waves"; instead of the singing swain returning in the twilight, he has a portrait of the consumptive husband "contending with weakness, weariness, and shame"; instead of "rural ease" and a peaceful contented old age, he has the broken-down peasant "journeying to his grave in pain," goaded on by the disdain of all, weeping "beneath the hillock," and burying his white locks in the snow as he tends the sheep; instead of the cottage of the respected sage of Auburn, resting at times in the alehouse or the church, loved by all, he gives us his famous picture of the workhouse,

> "Whose walls of mud scarce bear the broken door,"

the only home of

> "The lame, the blind, and far the happiest they!
> The moping idiot and the madman gay";

the humourous picture of the village schoolmaster he replaces by that of the apothecary "All pride and business, bustle and conceit," "who first insults the victim whom he kills," and "carries fate and physic in his eye" and "contempt upon his sapient sneer"; the dying pauper calls for the last consolation of the parish priest;

> "And doth not he, the pious man, appear,
> He, passing rich with forty pounds a year?
> Ah! no; a shepherd of a different stock."
> "A jovial youth who thinks his Sunday task
> As much as God or man can fairly ask;
> The rest he gives to loves and labours light;"

at last the miserable funeral is described; the busy priest is not there to bless the "poor man's bones"; that is the end.

> "There lie the happy dead, from trouble free,
> And the glad parish pays the frugal fee."

The Second Book begins with a promise of the other side of village life;—

> "I too must yield, that oft amidst these woes
> Are gleams of transient mirth and hours of sweet repose'.

He seems to be about to picture the tranquillity and happiness of the peasant's life especially on the sabbath; yet he almost immediately lapses back into his pessimistic vein; drunkenness and slander break the peace. He wishes

> "To show the great, those mightier sons of pride,
> How near in vice the lowest are allied."

He bids the poor cease to envy "those they call the great"; and makes the latter half of the poem another tribute to the Rutland family, by painting their grief over Lord Robert Manners killed in battle in 1782, and eulogising his virtues; it is a return to the Queen Anne poetry of patronage full of over-drawn praise and apostrophe, panelled with long similes introduced by "as" or "as when" and formally rhetorical.

8. This close was a symptom of retreat from his true sphere upon mere imitation of Pope. And his next poem, The Newspaper, published in 1785, though modern in theme, is Queen Anne in its form, treatment, and many of its references. It is as emi-satirical description of a new feature of city life, the development of the desire for news, and of the means of gratifying it. In his prose preface he says:

"I am willing to take the strongest hold I can upon the reader, by offering something which has the claim of novelty". And it reveals, better than any statistics could do, how thoroughly established in 1783 was the modern newspaper with all its variety, bustle, ephemeral efforts, "party rage", virulence, personality, scandal-monging, puffs, advertisements, and how little that is new in kind has been developed in the century since by all the concentration of talent in journalism. He mourns over his "busy, bustling time", that "suits ill with writers, very ill with rhyme", and sighs for the return of the golden age of literature, evidently the Queen Anne period, "when all found readers who could find a rhyme". The "daily swarm" of newspapers, Heralds, Posts, Gazettes, Ledgers, Chronicles, and even Sunday Monitors, have drawn readers away from more solid and permanent literature; the Town forsakes "the smoothest numbers for the harshest prose", written by "a traitor crew who thrive in troubled times".

> "Blind themselves, these erring guides hold out
> Alluring lights to lead us far about",

and screen scandal, slander, fraud, falsehood, and folly. Yet they spread; "a master-passion is the love of news", and

> "I too must aid, and pay to see my name
> Hung in these dirty avenues to fame".

He has to advertise his poems, and feels that he is almost encouraging a vice;

> "For daily bread the dirty trade they ply,
> Coin their fresh tales, and live upon the lie".

He closes by a warning to avoid the poet's corner;

> "Go! to your desks and counters all return,
> Your sonnets scatter, your acrostics burn".

9. Crabbe had a practical turn of mind and followed his own advice for more than twenty years. He kept on writing, but ceased to publish till 1807, when The Parish Register appeared. And all his manuscript including three novels he made a bonfire of. The reason for this long silence was doubtless not merely personal. His Newspaper, however fresh its theme, was belated in style. Chatterton had already lived and died, Cowper had just issued his first poems, and Burns and Blake were writing those lyrics

that were to shake the Queen Anne trammels off poetry, and lead it back to nature. The cool and measured description, in which Crabbe dealt, was quite unsuited to the "troubled times" of the French Revolution. Through all the poems he had written he had shown unconscious sensitiveness to the new revolutionism, and by his pessimistic pictures he had helped to stir the long sleeping discontent. But passion was needed when the uneasiness issued in revolution. The didactic poet and moralist had to stand aside.

**10.** When he awakened in 1807, his style, though not his verse, had changed. It had become far more matter-of-fact and more unpolished, if not actually slovenly. Lines in The Parish Register, The Borough, and The Tales make the parody in Rejected Addresses little of a parody;

> "That Bible, bought by sixpence weekly saved,
> Has choicest prints, by famous hands engraved".
> "Aged were both, that Dawkins, Ditchem this,
> Who much of marriage thought, and much amiss".

Couplets like these are not uncommon. He had abandoned even the appearance of art that had affiliated him to the school of Pope, and the atmosphere of pathos and romance that he had found in Goldsmith. But his theme had also changed. The wars had run off the dregs of village life, and the great development of industry, through the application of machinery and steam, had given comfort and hope, if not prosperity, to the villagers who remained. Crabbe himself had grown well-to-do and contented. Hence it is that his nineteenth century pictures of lowly life have bright colours in them. His Inebriety and The Village are all gloom. In The Parish Register he gives a large space to the virtuous and happy peasantry, though not ignoring the vicious, criminal, and tragic elements. "Auburn and Eden can no more be found" he insists; yet he has room for "fair scenes of peace". The poem is nothing but versified notes of the births, marriages, and deaths recorded in the parish register. There is no attempt made to classify or connect them. Part First, on Baptisms, is the most commonplace and lacking in sequence; the best of it lies in the occasional story—that of Lucy the miller's daughter and that of the foundling who rose to be

a knight; the satire appears in the description of the gardener with his "high-sounding words" and names like "Lonicera" for his children. Part Second, on Marriages, has most unity; and Part Third, on Deaths, most pathos. The best in the one is the common but melancholy story of Phœbe Dawson; in the other the portraits of the manly peasant, Isaac Ashford, whom death delivers from fear of the workhouse, of the managing widow, Frankford, and of old Dibble, the sexton to five different rectors, are, though less poetical, more realistic than any he had yet drawn. He has grown superior to the graces of poetry and more and more devoted himself to reality. He now deliberately selects prosaic features and prosaic details and expression. His new audience, with their eyes opened by the Revolution to the tragedies of the life around them, have become satisfied with the romance that lies in the facts of every-day life. Crabbe, therefore, simply arranges his own experiences of parish life in a portrait gallery and saws up his dialogue and description into couplets that have drifted far from the heroic. The increase of portraiture shows the tendency in this eighteenth century poet to depart from the abstractness of his native didacticism.

**11.** And this grows upon him in his next poem The Borough (1809), and, along with the tendency to dialogue, brings him at last to the versified narrative in his last poems, Tales in Verse (1812) and Tales of the Hall (1819). The passion of the new audience for story has at last mastered him, as it mastered Byron about the same time, and as it had produced Scott. Fiction in verse became one of the distinctive features of the first quarter of the century. The poets felt they had to appeal to a novel-reading public.

**12.** The Borough is but The Village "writ large," and dashed with some brighter colours. It has more poetry in it than The Parish Register, in spite of its more classificatory form, and more of the spirit of the nineteenth century, even though more reactionary. It is still the product of an eighteenth century poet, unelevated by the passion of post-revolutionary times, untouched by the new idealism. Commonsense moulds all the philosophy and all the art that it has, and keeps its flight not far above that of prose.

It is still dedicated to a patron, the Duke of Rutland, and it assumes a favourite eighteenth century form, that of a series of letters. It still echoes Pope, and occasionally Young, Gray, and Goldsmith. And it is still his native Suffolk village, seaside Aldborough, that he begins to paint. It is indeed this that brings memory into play and throws a slight halo round it. Nature is still observed with the eye of a realist; but it is more observed and more painted. Human nature is still watched from the outside, but with an intensity that, as in Peter Grimes, makes it almost psychologically dramatic. There is one flourish about liberty in the latter part of "The Election"; all else, politics, religion, social ideas, belong to the latter half of the eighteenth century; only, the middle class ecclesiasticism and conservatism are deepened somewhat by the reactionary movement of the first two decades of our century.

13. The letters deal in order with the following themes;—a description of the borough with a dramatic picture of a shipwreck; the church with a pathetic story of a consumptive sailor and his love; the vicar, ("fiddling and fishing were his arts; at times he altered sermons"), and the curate

> ("Pity a man so good, so mild, so meek,
> At such an age should have his bread to seek");

the dissenters, with an apology in prose for the representation of their spirit and sermons; the election with satirical pictures of the treatment of the candidates and the sale of votes; the legal profession, with a Hogarthian portrait of the scoundrel attorney Swallow ("Satan helped him to his pen and ink"); the medical profession, with a scathing analysis of the quack; the industries, with a loving portrait of the entomologist weaver, and a dramatic picture of the hard wealthy merchant; the amusements, with a vivid description of a winter fog; the clubs, and social meetings; the inns with an invocation to the muse of John Phillips, Shenstone, and Pope, to help him with his unusual and prosaic theme; the strolling players

> ("Sad, happy race! soon raised and soon depressed,
> Your days all passed in jeopardy and jest");

the almshouse and trustees, with an excursion into aristocratic life in Sir Denys Brand; the life of Blaney, a wealthy

heir reduced by extravagance to the almshouse; Clelia, a fast young lady brought to the same end; Benbow, a Bardolph of the time, another inmate; the hospital and governors, a piece written earlier in life; the poor and their dwellings, with a denunciation of the workhouse system, or system of indoor relief, and a realistic picture of a fisherman's hut and household; the parish clerk, a keenly satirical picture of the tragic fall of Jachin a censoriously virtuous critic of his neighbours,

> ("Not Satan's friends, nor Satan's self, could bear
> The cautious man who took of souls such care");

the story of Ellen Orford, the victim of injustice and misfortune; that of Abel Keene who falls by passing from piety to scepticism; that of Peter Grimes who comes to be haunted by the victims of his cruelty; the prisons with a prisoner's dream of his youth and his native place,

> ("Where dwarfish flowers among the gorse are spread
> And the lamb browses by the linnet's bed");

and the schools, with portraits of the various types of teachers and scholars.

14. He closes with a lamentation over the outward futility of a scholar's life, and a brief paragraph on its inward pleasures. From this he passes to his conception of his own purpose as a poet.

> "Man as he is to place in all men's view,
> Yet none with rancour, none with scorn pursue."

He never meant to be personal in his portraits;

> "'This is a likeness' may they all declare,
> 'And I have seen him, but I know not where'."
> "I search, a Quixote, all the land about,
> To find its giants and enchanters out";
> "But is there man whom I would injure? No!
> I am to him a fellow not a foe".

Here he reveals the secret of his power. He is in full sympathy with all his topics. He paints lowly life and he is a part of it—the secret of Goldsmith, of Cowper, of Burns, that made them the true pioneers of a popular, a national literature. In a note to Peter Grimes he appeals for the justification of his tragic picture to Scott's Marmion, where "the ruffian" "has no shame or remorse, but the corrosion of helpless want". But the introduction of Ellen Orford

shows how little sympathy he had with the heroes, villains, or victims, of romance. He laughs at the second-hand pictures of life in the novels of the day. "I've often marvelled" "that books" "should show so little how we truly live"; their characters are but

> "Creatures borrowed and again conveyed
> From book to book, the shadow of a shade".
> "Time have I lent—I would their debt were less—
> To flow'ry pages of sublime distress;
> And to the heroine's soul-distracting fears
> I early gave my sixpences and tears".

He turns to the lowly, and never shrinks from the lowliest and most sordid detail, that he may paint reality, "the stronger features of the soul".

15. The chief evidence of the poem being written in the nineteenth century consists in one or two indirect references to the French Revolution, in the change in the state of the country population through industrialism, and in the growth of the story element. It is the same with his Tales, though they are rather character-sketches than tales. He has gone back to the older English poetry for his inspiration and models. In his prose preface he appeals to Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, and, at the beginning of each of the twenty-one Tales, he has three or four appropriate quotations from Shakespeare. He had been recommended to write an heroic poem; this is the nearest approach he or his age could make to it. As he rejected the unrealities of the new fiction, so he rejects the sublimities of the epic. He appeals, with Dryden, "to the plain sense and sober judgement" of his readers, and wishes only to entertain them. But they are full of moral lessons; they are, in fact, sermons for the middle classes in the shape of anecdotes and satirical sketches. One of the horrors of the new audience of literature during the early part of this century was free-thinking; they shrank from everything that savoured of it as they would from crime. And a number of these sketches have as their theme the fate of those who read books and think thoughts that are critical of religious traditions; The Gentleman Farmer, The Learned Boy, and Edward Shore, deal with the careers of men who reject religion for reason, the two former satirically, the last tragically. The

middle class churchmen of the time, too, had great scorn and hatred of the survival of Puritanism, and the appearance of new sects; The Frank Courtship, The Struggles of Conscience, and The Convert, treat, with some humour and perhaps a shadow of intolerance, the household troubles and the inner conflict of minds that did not accept the common-sense teaching of the church. Another prominent feature of the new middle class life was the collision between new social or educational ambitions and old circumstances or tastes. Procrastination, The Widow's Tale, The Mother, and The Brothers, hold up to scorn, with almost the irony of Thackeray, the affectations that the new wealth or comfort bred. Squire Thomas, and Advice paint the rude, often immoral, life led by the country gentleman of the beginning of the century. The Patron is a story of elections and the tragic fate of ambitious genius. The Dumb Orators slily satirises the pompous and cowardly garrulity of many of the occupants of the bench, and of the atheistical and revolutionary orators. Arabella as slily laughs at self-deceiving prudery. The Parting Hour, The Lover's Journey, and Jesse and Colin, are the usual stories of love and its rugged course. The Confidant, Resentment, and The Wager, deal with the tragic or amusing features of domestic life. They are all the observations of a keen, and, on the whole, impartial, insight into the human nature of the post-revolutionary English middle class. They are as realistic, and as mildly satirical, as his previous poems; but they are less poetical, if we exclude The Parish Register. Taken all together, his poetry gives the truest picture of the new reading public; it both paints them and mirrors them; for Crabbe belonged to them. It stands intermediate between the literature of learning and culture of narrow circles and the literature of the people. In it can best be studied the tastes and manners of the new audience. It gives us the keynote of both periods. For it stands aloof from the French Revolution and its influence, and passes, with the interests of the class that was about to pay authors by their nnmbers, out of the eighteenth century into the nineteenth.

## Section 4.

Campbell and Bloomfield, though also representing the emotions and tastes of the new classes, and publishing each his first poem in the heroic couplet, and before the century closed, belong to the latter period. Rogers is divided between the two. He began in the school of Gray with his Ode to Superstition (1786), when he was twenty-three years of age; he passed into the school of Goldsmith in his Pleasures of Memory (1792), and of Pope in his Epistle to a Friend (1798); his Columbus (1812) and Jaqueline (1814) are the outcome of the new passion for the romantic past and for narrative; and his Human Life (1819) and Italy (1822) belong in spirit and treatment to the first half of the nineteenth century. A minor poet is bound to change with the literature that surrounds him, or he falls out of the ranks. It is only through his earlier poems that Rogers belongs to the eighteenth century. His Ode to Superstition he had in the style of the poets of the Queen Anne period elaborated with the most painful self-criticism; though running to only 156 lines, it took him two years to write. It is but an academic exercise modelled on the Pindaric odes of Gray and Collins, but especially on Gray's Bard. It refers to the picturesque features of various ancient rites, Greek, Hindoo, Scandinavian, Egyptian, Persian, Celtic, and deals like its models in personifications. It is formal and second-hand in its emotions and fancy. The Pleasures of Memory shows a great advance both in its choice of models and in its art. Goldsmith had met the new backward-turning fancy of the people by his poetry of reminiscence. And Rogers set himself to systematise it. He followed the psychological poets like Akenside in his choice of an abstract theme. But he fitted his treatment to the growing love of nature; he made his poem a series of landscapes and pictures, sometimes in the manner of Goldsmith, sometimes in that of Thomson, with many touches from Pope. The result is a poem of much picturesque effect and fine melody. He begins with a village scene, backed by a fancy-picture of his native place, his childhood, his school, the fortune-telling gipsy, and the old church-yard, where "I search the record of each

mouldering stone". He then apostrophises Memory, and under her guidance brings up various scenes typical or historic; he pictures the faithful memory of the horse and dog, and the instinctive memory of the dove and the bee. In the Second Part he passes from sensuous memory, that belongs to animals as well as to man, and descants upon emotional and intellectual memory, that is only human. He versifies the romance it throws round the nun taking the veil, the African slave, the dream during sleep, the Savoyard with "pipe of merry sound", the wreck of genius, and the veteran soldier at Chelsea, and he closes with a pathetic tale of love of young Florio losing his Julia when crossing one of the lakes of Cumberland. In this last he anticipates somewhat the fervid insight of the Lake school into the beauty of mountain scenery. In An Epistle to a Friend there is not much development, except in his classical reading, and in his appreciation of the treasures of ancient art, many of which he had seen on his visit to Paris in 1791. He stands up for the wholesomeness of a country life, although in the following year he removed to the city and became a thorough denizen of it. He paints, in the style of Horace, Boileau, and Pope, all the advantages of his house, or, as he calls it, "his hermit cell",

> "Far from the joyless glare, the maddening strife,
> And all the dull impertinence of life".

And he boasts of the "clear mirror of his moral page", scorning "the false lustre of licentious thought". Even this is purely imitative. He belonged essentially to the city, like the Queen Anne poets, and it was merely the new classes from which he came that drew him to the description of nature. His imitativeness is best shown by the fact that though he was brought up at the feet of Price, the sympathiser with the French Revolution, and in the midst of revolutionism, his poetry was little affected by it; and still more by the fact that though his sayings prove him to have been one of the best epigrammatists of the day and one of the keenest satirists, he chose the favourite didactic and descriptive poetry of his youth to work in, and rejected satire.

## Section 5.

He really belonged to the school of Akenside, although he adopted the heroic couplet as moulded by Goldsmith, and often echoed Pope. He mingled moralising with description, high-flown rhetoric with metaphysical purpose in the same way as that didactic poet. He belonged to the same current of literary ambition, which, rising just before the middle of the century with the reappearance of the middle class and the growth of the industry that gave them wealth and comfort, gradually prepared the way for nineteenth century literature. One of the most noteworthy features of English poetry just after the Queen Anne period was the large number of second-rate poets, all of them coming from the new audience of literature; another was its tendency to metaphysics, and a third was its adoption of Miltonic blank verse. They are closely connected. The establishment of the Hanoverian dynasty on the throne had freed the descendants of the Puritans and of the opponents of Stuart absolutism from all fear of persecution, and given them confidence in their own instincts, tastes, and opinions. And the application of water-power and machinery to manufactures and the development of commerce had begun to give them comfort and leisure. They had never abandoned the love of philosophy that their theological tastes had implied; nor had they ceased to read their Paradise Lost. In this atmosphere their youth were brought up and many of them began to aspire to literary fame. They had plenty of poetic sentiment without any real poetic power; they had the average power of philosophising without any capacity for exact thought. Hence the strange hybrid of philosophy and poetry that was such a favourite last century, the metaphysical essay in verse. And there was evidently a growing audience for it; else the supply would soon have ceased. The yeomen, tradesmen, and merchants of the middle classes had been nurtured on weekly sermons and Milton, and took naturally to the results of cross-fertilisation between them. And from 1740 onwards through the century we have an unfailing stream of didactic blank verse that alternates moralisation or analysis and picture. Addison had shewn that he meant The

Spectator for the wider audience, for the descendants of the Puritans, as well as for London society, when he contributed his papers on Milton and on Imagination. But he went no deeper than the surface of either subject with his Queen Anne pseudo-classicism; and the true appreciation of Miltonic verse, and the poetical treatment of philosophical subjects, did not appear till the age of Addison and Pope was vanishing, and the middle classes were beginning to mould literature more than London society. It is true that we have blank verse reappearing in poetry as early as Thomson's Seasons (1726-28), and that Pope felt the philosophical tendencies of his new audience so much as to turn to metaphysics and ethics in his Essay on Man (1733-34). But the combination of philosophy and blank verse does not appear till close on the death of Pope (1744).

## Section 6.

1. The best representative of it was Mark Akenside, who in January 1744 published his Pleasures of Imagination when twenty-three years of age. Dodsley the publisher gave him, on the advice of Pope, a price that was quite exceptional for a new poet's work—£120.. And a second edition was demanded before the year was out. Later in life he set himself to the task of recasting its three books into four. The first, which deals with the beauty and greatness of nature and the connection of beauty with truth and goodness, appeared in 1757; the second, which treats of truth, virtue, vice, ridicule, and the passions, appeared in 1765; and a fragment of the third and one of the fourth were published after his death in 1770. But the first form is acknowledged by all to be the best, to be more poetical though less methodic or philosophical. It is more concrete; the second book, for example, is more than half filled with the speech or tale of a sage, whom he calls Harmodius, "wont to teach my early age" "thy lonely-whispering voice, O faithful Nature"; the aged teacher and prophet narrates a vision he had had "in the windings of an ancient wood"; "the genius of human kind" appeared to him as he was mourning over the dead Parthenia and brought before his eyes a landscape that is a copy of Milton's Eden, and a

dramatic scene not unlike Milton's description of the fall, but really an allegory of the eternal union of virtue and pleasure. This disappears in the new version. The poem is full of splendidly rhetorical pictures and apostrophes, the product rather of philosophic eloquence than of poetic imagination; it is Milton narrowed down to The Essay On Man; even the verse is a cross between the Miltonic sublimity and the Popian balance and antithesis. The philosophy is puritanism edited by Shaftesbury; it has a back-ground of stoical theology; in its account of creation it is calvinistic and predestinarian; yet it adopts the optimistic dream of "Characteristics"; its ethics are, like Shaftesbury's, a compromise between the utilitarianism natural to the time and the moral sense theory that was about to rule philosophy through Scotland; its aesthetics are Addison's deepened somewhat by Hutcheson; and it treats the Newtonian physics and astronomy with an approach to sublimity. The

> "high-born soul soars
> The blue profound, and hovering round the sun,
> Beholds him pouring the redundant stream
> Of light; beholds his unrelenting sway
> Bend the reluctant planets to absolve
> The fated rounds of Time"; "Amazed she views
> The empyreal waste";
> "And fields of radiance, whose unfading light
> Has travelled the profound six thousand years,
> Nor yet arrived in sight of mortal things."

Most of the learning and philosophy of the book he acquired at Edinburgh University where he wrote it. And it is noteworthy that a majority of the writers of blank verse and of didactic poetry in the eighteenth century were either born or trained in Edinburgh. Thomson, Blair, Mallet, the author of Albania, Wilkie, Armstrong, Grainger, Michael Bruce, Falconer were all Scotchmen and all attempted blank verse or the didactic descriptive poem. Edinburgh had grown since the Union a centre of literary ambition and influence almost as important as London though still subsidiary to it. It had direct intercourse with France, and, in Hume, Adam Smith, Smollett, Mackintosh, and a dozen more, brought the new French movements, literary and philosophical, revolutionary and sceptical, to bear upon English literature. Yet it retained a deep impress from the

older puritanism. The Moderates had not the best of it in the country districts. And there Paradise Lost and the Pilgrim's Progress were as much household books as the Bible, Boston's Fourfold State, and Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul. Thus it was that when the literary didacticism of the Queen Anne age was somewhat exhausted, a semi-religious, semi-philosophical didacticism chiefly in the guise of Miltonic blank verse, and indulging much in pictures of nature came to reinforce it, and prepare it for the hands of Cowper and Wordsworth. It came largely from Scotland and began to appear about the time of the retirement of Walpole (1742), though Arbuthnot and Thomson are two Scotch writers who appeared in the London world earlier in the century. With the necessity of conciliating Scotland after the rebellion of 1745, and the growing influence of Scotch politicians like Bute, the emigration of Scottish talent to London became one of the favourite themes of witty or satiric jealousy; the best of it remained at home, and in Hume, Adam Smith, Burns, Dugald Stewart, Scott, deeply influenced European thought and literature.

## Section 7.

1. Miltonic didacticism was not confined to Scotland. About the same date (1740) it forced a true representative of the Queen Anne spirit, Edward Young, out of the heroic couplet and satire into blank verse and religious moralisings. He was nearly sixty before he began his most famous poem, Night Thoughts. He had spent youth and manhood partly in dissipation, partly in wooing preferment by fulsome odes to monarchs and statesmen. He followed the drift of his time in writing at first pompously didactic poems (The Last Day 1713, The Force of Religion 1715), pompous tragedies (Busiris 1719, and Revenge 1721) and rhetorical satires in the heroic couplet (The Universal Passion—The Love of Fame, 1725). By his versified flatteries he gained a pension of £200 a year which he enjoyed to his death in 1765. Not long after gaining it he professed to have become tired of the world and courtiership, and entered the church, married a titled widow, and got the living of Welwyn in

Hertfordshire, where he remained much against his real desires for the rest of his life. He lost his wife and his two daughters when nearly sixty, and the bereavement gave a brief term of sincerity to his poetic lament over life in the Night Thoughts, which he began to publish the year after (1742), and continued till he had finished nine books or nights in 1745. The first three nights are devoted to Philander, Narcissa, Lucia, absurdly idealised representations of his dead stepson and stepdaughters, keep to the mood of lament, and are most successful. Yet even here his optimistic utilitarianism and religious affectation intrude and spoil genuine eloquence by low ideals. The grief has not changed his nature any more than his retirement from the world did. He has only extended the sphere of his sycophancy; he has been all his life the parasite of men; he is now besides the spaniel of God; he does not resign the hope of worldly favours; he still addresses possible patrons in fulsome terms; but proximity to death makes him think of the supreme and ultimate favour, and he concentrates all his armoury of praise and apostrophe upon its arbiter. The hollowness of the Miltonic sublimities becomes more apparent as the nights proceed, till in the ninth, called "Consolation," the straining after effect and the pharisaic pietisms grow ridiculous. God descends to the last judgment with groans from hell and "shouts of joy from heaven"; "The charmed spectators thunder their applause"; and the "sever'd throng" pass to "distinct abodes sulphurous or ambrosial." The "goddess"

> "Turns her adamantine key's enormous size
> Through Destiny's inextricable wards,

and flings it

> "from the crystal battlements of heaven",

and hell

> "Returns in groans the melancholy roar";
> "Its hideous groans
> Join Heaven's sweet Hallelujahs in Thy praise".

The Newtonian astronomy is a perfect treasure-house of illustration and inflated eloquence; it enables him to sit on Saturns' ring and see

> "Perhaps the villas of descending gods".

But the balance and antithesis of the heroic couplet follow him and make even his best cosmic picture or parallel monotonous; he has none of the varied rhythm of even The Pleasures of Imagination. Nor are there the lofty ideals of that poem to give atmosphere to the straining after religious thought. And even his best passages are spoiled by trivial analogies; as, for example, when speaking of the star of night;

> "Divine Instructor! Thy first volume this
> For man's perusal! All in capitals!"

2. A far nearer approach to Miltonism applied to gloomy moralisation was made by Robert Blair, a Scotch clergyman, in his poem "The Grave," published in 1743, but written long before. The pulpiteering rhetoric is not sawn up into equal lengths, but has been strengthened by an appreciative study of Shakespeare. Yet it reveals its time as much in the approaches it makes, like the Night Thoughts, to bathos. The antitheses of death take the place of those of the worlds above and are equally marred by mean analogies. Lines like these show that Blair was a true poet;

> "'Tis but a night, a long and moonless night,
> We make the grave our bed and then are gone.
> Thus at the shut of eve the weary bird
> Leaves the wide air and in some lonely brake
> Cowers down."

## Section 8.

1. As real a poet was John Dyer, a Welshman, who, in his Grongar Hill, published in the same year as Thomson's Winter (1726), revealed the fact that in the more mountainous districts lay all the material for the regeneration of English poetry. It is a brief poem in rhyming octosyllabics giving a picture of the scenes to be viewed from Grongar Hill. It shows a close study of the Puritan secular poets, and especially Marvell, and as true an appreciation of the beauty of nature as The Seasons. And there is a tinge of melancholy in it, that adds grace to it, as in these lines:—

> "But transient is the smile of fate!
> A little rule, a little sway

A sunbeam in a winter's day,
Is all the proud and mighty have
Between the cradle and the grave ".

And this love of the shadowed side of life developed, and along with a trip to Italy and his study of Milton, produced his blank verse poem The Ruins of Rome in 1740.

**2.** But the poem that showed best how much he belonged to the middle of the eighteenth century was The Fleece, published in 1757, the year before his death. He had given up the profession of painter, and, entering the church, held livings in Leicestershire, Huntingdonshire, and Lincolnshire. It was the industrial era just opening, and his pastoral surroundings, that forced the theme and its treatment on his imagination. All the processes connected with wool, its rearing, and manufacture, are described in blank verse, often with genuine poetry, even the making of the steel shears at Sheffield being versified. The poem tells better than any contemporary history could where the new audience of literature was to be found; in the shepherds' huts, and the great centres of industry and commerce Milton was still read, and the realities of the growing industrial life were most talked of.

**3.** Richard Glover (1712-1785) had already attempted to find the poetry of commercial life in his "London or the Progress of Commerce" (1739). A merchant himself, he also showed that English merchants could see the romance of ancient times as well as of modern. In his Leonidas, first published in 1737, enlarged from nine to twelve books in 1770, and added to in its sequel, the Athenaid, published posthumously (1788), he revealed the influence of both Milton and Pope on himself and his class and readers. It weaves modern romance and the passion for political freedom and English patriotism into the story of Thermopylae. He was, like Akenside and all the progressive minds of the middle class, opposed to Walpole and his policy, and uses all these poems, as well as his Ballad of Admiral Hosier's Ghost, as political propaganda. But the pseudo-classicism of the Queen Anne era bears the art down, whilst the Popian balance destroys the Miltonic rhythm of the blank verse. The poems were too monotonous to live.

4. John Armstrong (1709-1779), like his friend James Thomson, a son of the manse, brought up in Roxburghshire, and trained at Edinburgh University, came closer in spirit to the Queen Anne age. His occupation as a medical man in London brought him, like his countryman, Arbuthnot, into close intimacy with the utilitarian, commonsense, and often gross tone of fashionable life. His poems, The Art of Preserving Health (1744), and The Economy of Love (1739), though written in Thomsonian blank verse, and sometimes striving after sublimities, represent well the common level Queen Anne poetry could reach when it was didactic without satire; they are marred both by the vulgarities and bathos of Night Thoughts, and by the grossnesses of Swift. And yet there is promise of the coming poetry, as also in the stanzas contributed by him to Thomson's Castle of Indolence, where too he is portrayed; he "quite detested talk", "oft stung by spleen", often "inly thrilled" by "pensive fury";

"Nor ever uttered word, save when first shone
The glittering star of eve,—'Thank Heaven, the day is done.'"

His description of the sweating sickness in The Art of Preserving Health has much of the vigour and the repulsive picturesqueness of that by Lucretius of the plague at Athens. His verse is now Miltonic, again Thomsonian; but oftenest it needs but rhyme to be Popian, as, for example:—

"Who never fasts no banquet e'er enjoys:
Who never toils or watches never sleeps."

And in his later and briefer poems, Benevolence, and Taste, he returns to the heroic couplet and to the satiric poetry of the Queen Anne age.

5. Another Edinburgh-trained doctor, James Grainger (1721-1766), practising first in London, and afterwards in the West Indies, followed the fashion of his time, and tried to elevate by a tumid sounding verse a theme from industrial life. In his Sugar Cane (1764), he describes the employments of the negroes, whom he conventionally calls swains, and the various kinds of work on a plantation, discussing even rats, monkeys, flies, and hurricanes. Like Dyer's Fleece, it reveals the drift of English civilisation towards industrialism and the change in the audience of literature.

6. But the most frequent didactic use of blank verse during the period was for the description of out-door scenes strung together, as in Thomson's Seasons, by some theme that took its poet into the presence of nature, like Somerville's Chase (1734) and Mason's English Garden (1772-1782). Thus was the way prepared for Cowper's Task ; and following him the use was continued in the nineteenth century by poems like Graham's Sabbath (1804) and Pollok's Course of Time. Another favourite use of it for the same purpose was to deal with a special locality. Instances were Albania, describing Scotland (1737), Amwell, by John Scott, the Quaker-poet, describing his native place (1776), Lochleven not published till 1770 after the death of its young author Michael Bruce (1746-1767), Lewesdon Hill (1786) by the Professor of Poetry at Oxford, Rev. William Crowe, and Beachy Head by the authoress of The Old Manor House, Mrs. Charlotte Smith (1749-1806). And Wordsworth, in his Lines written near Tintern Abbey (1798), had only to infuse the new spirit into this old form. A less common use was to take an incident or narrative and interweave descriptions of nature and reflections on it. Mallet's Amyntor and Theodora, which leads Aurelius a refugee from the religious persecutions of the Restoration to St. Kilda (1747), is an instance. Wordsworth took this up and made it his own in Michael and other shorter poems and also in The Excursion. And during the century the blank verse developed into something quite different from its Miltonic use. It gave up its larger harmonies and its grandeur, its difficult syntax, and its learned and new use of words. It approached nearer to prose, and even acquired the simplicity and brevity of conversational English. It still made efforts at the old variety of rhythm and melody. But it never returned to the greatness and intensity it had shown in Milton's hands. So it was with the didacticism ; it gradually gave up the abstractness of its source, and resorted more to pictures or character-sketches or narrative ; it put off the guise of teacher or preacher, and tried to conceal its primary purpose ; it moralised less and less. If we compare The Pleasures of Memory of Rogers and The Pleasures of Hope of Campbell, coming at the close of the century, with the Pleasures of Imagination of Akenside (1744) and The

Pleasures of Melancholy of Thomas Warton (1745), the increasing concreteness becomes apparent. The earlier poems are all apostrophe and maxim; the later are all picture and suggestion. Its use for narrative gets more and more predominant, as in Southey's Joan of Arc (1793), and Landor's Gebir (1795). As we advance in the nineteenth century, the blank verse becomes more plastic and the didacticism more narrative and picture. In the hands of Browning in Pauline and Paracelsus, of Mrs. Browning in Aurora Leigh, and of Tennyson in Morte d'Arthur, they lose all traces of their origin; these poets teach their lesson by dramatic scene or psychological analysis of character, whilst they give their verse all the freedom and adaptability of the new prose and all the melody of true poetry.

7. The history of the heroic couplet is one rather of decay than development. When Johnson in his Lives of the Poets spoke of poetry having reached its highest point in Dryden and Pope and expressed something approaching despair of its ever surpassing their art, he meant, of course, poetry as represented by the heroic verse. Its true métier was epigrammatic satire, satire that had its point in the couplet, or at least in nothing longer than the paragraph rising to a climax; its balance demanded continual halting-places to clench its point and to prevent monotony. Pope in his Rape of the Lock and Satires revealed this about it, and raised it to its highest. The rest of the century went back again and again to the study of his use of it and only brought out more and more clearly its lack of plasticity and freedom by applying it to other purposes than satire. And in the nineteenth century a consciousness grew in the minds of poets and their readers that its day was past and it has sunk into an academic exercise. Cowper and Crabbe galvanised it into popularity, and some poets like Byron began their career by using it; but they at once abandoned it. Its history is practically confined to the eighteenth century. Few minor poets of the latter half of that period could keep from trying their hand at it. For no great poet arose to snatch the laurel from the head of Pope and give a new model; and the conditions out of which it grew still persisted in London society, the artificial manners, the love of wit, the low ideal of life, the rhetorical prose, and the dominant influence of political oratory.

8. Its most frequent use in the eighteenth century was the satiric; yet the didactic also claimed it as a method of expression; and as the century proceeded these gave way to the descriptive and finally to the narrative, though both of the primary uses of it in the Queen Anne period, satiric and didactic, continued to tinge them. Even the moralising Miltonist Akenside and the Pindarists Gray and Collins were drawn to it; the former in his satiric attack on Pulteney for his desertion of the opposition to Walpole, Epistle to Curio, afterwards rewritten in stanzas, and in his British Philippic on the Spanish war; the latter, Gray, in his The Alliance of Education and Government, and Collins in some of his Eclogues such as Hassan or The Camel-driver, the one didactic, the other narrative. Gilbert West's Ad Amicos (1740), Lord Lyttelton's Advice to a Lady, Armstrong's Benevolence, and Taste, Byrom's Pastoral, are instances of its power to attract writers of the most varied talents and purposes before the turning point of the century; the occasional poem, society verses, the didactic satire, and the pastoral all chose it as their medium. And whenever a minor poet took up an elaborate task in verse, he was as much inclined to the heroic couplet as to blank verse, as, for example, the Scotchman, John Wilson in his descriptive poem The Clyde (1767), Dr. William Wilkie in his echo of Pope's Homer, The Epigoniad (1757), and William Julius Mickle in his translation of the Lusiad of the Portuguese poet Camoens (1771-1776). There seems indeed to have been a distinct renaissance of the heroic couplet for didactic and narrative purposes in the last quarter of the century, probably due to the influence of Johnson in his Lives of the Poets and to the example of Goldsmith. Not only did Crabbe, Rogers, and Bloomfield adopt it as their chief medium of poetic expression, and Kirke White, Campbell, and Byron prefer it in their earliest attempts, but the imitators and minor schools of poetry, though ever anxious to show themselves abreast of their time by newness of form, resorted to this old-fashioned verse. Its use by William Hayley, the dellacruscan and biographer of Cowper, is perhaps the best proof of its renewed popularity. He wrote most of his much-read didactic poems in it, his poetical essays, Essay on History (1780), Essay on Epic

Poetry (1782), Essay on Old Maids (1785), Essay on Sculpture (1800) and his various "Triumphs," Triumphs of Temper (1781), The Triumph of Music (1804), according to Byron "for ever feeble and for ever tame".

## Section 9.

1. But its freshest and most striking use by the minor poets for the didactic and descriptive was in Falconer's Shipwreck (1762) and Dr. Erasmus Darwin's Botanic Garden. It is a strange thing that so oceanic a nation as Britain should leave her pursuits and conquests on the sea so long unsung. Most of the stories of Elizabethan adventure are told in prose. And it is still stranger that the prosaic, uninspired eighteenth century should begin the task of singing the romance of the sea. Gay's Black-eyed Susan, Glover's Admiral Hosier's Ghost, and the sea-songs of Dibdin alone, would show that there was something exceptional in the age calling out the imaginations of Englishmen towards the sea; the Translation of the Lusiad, and Falconer's Shipwreck, point to the same conclusion. It was the naval victories of the time that stirred the English sea-fancy. Commercial struggle, adventure, and conquest are gradual and unobtrusive; and they remain voiceless till national victories by national ships throw a halo round the everyday pursuit. But it was singular that it was a Scotch sailor in the mercantile marine that first attempted the romance of his calling. William Falconer, the son of an Edinburgh barber, and the butt of his school, took with him to sea a strong taste for classics and Queen Anne poetry; and having been wrecked, in 1750 at eighteen, off Cape Colonna in Greece, he set himself to work up his adventure into a poem. The result of twelve years' polishing was The Shipwreck, first published in 1762. It brought him a post in the navy, and he revised the poem and enlarged it; the new edition (1764) had 900 more lines. After a period on land he went to sea again in 1769, and his ship The Aurora never returned. He had left another revision which was published on his departure. The additions and changes were no improvements; the first version, though marred by all the technicalities of a ship

and ship life, another symptom of the close approach that eighteenth century poetry made to the functions of prose, is full of naiveté and pathos, and less encumbered by the artificialities and the pedantic pseudo-classicisms of the Queen Anne poetry. In the second edition he interwove a strand from the new romance of the time; he introduced a love story and characters in the manner of the fiction that was growing so fashionable. He gives them names from the Gothic stories that were coming into vogue; Albert is the master of the ship, Rodmond the mate, Arion evidently the poet himself, the second mate, and Palemon the passenger whose love for Anna is sandwiched, in the form of story and apostrophe, into the narrative. The first canto describes the characters of these four, and various aspects of nature on the coast of Candia, which the ship leaves on her return home, a calm noon, a magnificent sunset "a sea of living gold", a midnight with a haloed moon; the descriptions are varied by Palemon's love story, Arion's dream, and the picture of the ship as she would appear from the shore. The second describes the voyage from the coast of Candia to that of Greece; they burst a waterspout and catch a dolphin; and then the action begins; the wind rises, the main-sail is split; the ship is driven from her course as the sun sets lowering; four seamen are lost whilst reefing as she dips her yard-arm into the sea; a sea bursts over her and she labours; the crew work at the pumps; the officers consult, and the master addresses them in a style that evidently emulates the speeches of Aeneas in Dryden's Virgil, and would better suit the House of Commons that listened to Burke than the crew of a ship that was driving on a lee shore; there is in the speeches of Albert, Rodmond, and Arion a reminiscence of Pope's translations of the speeches in the councils of the gods in the Iliad. Popian sublimities sound burlesque on eighteenth century sailors' lips; streams of tobacco juice from the ruminated quid were more native to them than such streams of eloquence;—

> "Unhappy partners in a wayward fate!
> Whose courage now is known perhaps too late;
> You who unmoved behold this angry storm,
> In conflict all the rolling deep deform".

And so on for nearly a hundred lines. The end is that they

cut the mizzen-mast and scud before the wind. In the third canto the poet lingers for nearly four hundred lines over the historical glories of the shores upon which they were drifting to death. At line 378 he resumes his subject, addresses the spirits of the storm, and describes with considerable power the incidents of the wreck, the helmsman blinded by lightning, the masts and spars falling, the struggle for life, the parting of the ship, the death of the officers, and the dying scene of Palemon on the beach. The final version is a wonderful medley of old art and new times. The industrial era stirs the poet to the choice of his theme, the Queen Anne period to the choice of his verse; the romantic movement compels him to introduce a love-story; the pseudo-classicism of Dryden and Pope makes him follow the Homeric and Virgilian method, and throw in a long passage of versified classical learning; the learned pedantry of the old scholarship and the technical pedantry of the new era of industry mingle on his pages. We find couplets like these side by side all through the poem;—

> "The reef enwrapped, the inserted knittles tied,
> The halyards, throat and peak, are next applied".
>
> "When sacred Orpheus on the Stygian coast
> With notes divine deplored his consort lost".

So the new insight into nature, and love of the picturesque and wild, neighbour the old didacticism, moralisation, and rhetorical sublimities. The poem is worthy of attention, if only for its illustration of both the vanishing and the coming time.

## Section 10.

1. So it is with The Botanic Garden, a poem that came almost a generation after The Shipwreck. Its author, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of the great evolutionist of our century, would have repudiated any sympathy or affinity with a satirist who could attack Chatham and all the advocates of freedom and progress so fiercely as Falconer did in The Demagogue (1765); and yet he is as truly conservative in his art; whilst thinking that he surpasses Dryden and Pope in polish, he really returns to the use of

the heroic couplet as it was before these poets took it up; and in the intellectual machinery of the poem he adopts the elaborate allegory of seventeenth century poetry and the belated sylphs and gnomes of The Rape of the Lock. It plainly comes after the Queen Anne poets, and profits by the melody and balance of their couplets; but it often has a stammer or halt in its metre, and as often indulges in imperfect rhymes like "air" and "car", "broad" and "road". Passages in it attain an airy beauty that reminds us of Pope's mock-heroic;

> "Stay thy soft-murmuring waters, gentle rill;
> Hush, whispering winds, ye rustling leaves be still;
> Rest, silver butterflies, your quivering wings;
> Alight, ye beetles, from your airy rings;
> Ye painted moths, your gold-eyed plumage furl,
> Blow your wide horns, your spiral trunks uncurl."

Or again in the invocation to the goddess of botany;—

> "O'er the still dawn thy placid smile effuse,
> And with thy silver sandals print the dews;
> In noon's bright blaze thy vermeil vest unfold,
> And wave thy emerald banner starred with gold."

But as a rule the similes and pictures are overdrawn and tedious, the other oraments are meretricious, and there is a sense of bathos in the contrast between the prosaic purpose and the pompous verse.

**2.** It is the spirit of revolutionism in the poem that is most interesting; it was unconscious in Goldsmith and Cowper; it is a deliberate creed in Darwin. For example, in a passage which draws an analogy to a tropical plant, drifted to the Norwegian shore, from the finding of the child Moses amongst the bulrushes, he closes with a denunciation of slavery and an appeal to "Britannia's bands of senators" ending;—

> 'Hear him, ye senates! hear this truth sublime,
> He who allows oppression, shares the crime'!"

So, in the second canto of the Economy of Vegetation, he welcomes the French Revolution as well as the American, and approves of the risings in Ireland; "Immortal Franklin watched the callow crew" of "tyrant Power", "And stabbed the struggling vampires ere they flew"; the contagion of freedom spread; "hill lighted hill and man electrised

man"; the "giant warrior" Liberty "Helmed his bold course to fair Hibernia's vales"; and "sad superstition wails her empire torn"; he then rent the "iron cage" that "enthralled" him in the Bastille, bound "by the weak hands of confessors and Kings";

> "High o'er his foes his hundred arms he rears,
> Ploughshares his swords, and pruning hooks his spears;
> Calls to the good and brave with voice that rolls
> Like Heaven's own thunder round the echoing poles".

And this, the third part of his poem, the Economy of Vegetation, was published in 1792, when the September Massacres and the execution of the king and queen were preparing the way for the Reign of Terror. But even in the earlier parts, the Botanic Garden (1781), and The Loves of the Plants (1789), though there is no passage so pronounced as this, the revolutionary spirit ever and again appears.

3. It was little wonder that Canning, Frere, Ellis, and Gifford singled out Darwin to pillory in their Anti-Jacobin, a weekly journal (1797-98), meant to satirise the French Revolution and its principles. They had already laughed in The Progress of Man at the teaching of Godwin's Political Justice as represented by Payne Knight in his Progress of Civil Society, a didactic poem in heroic couplets (1796), and in it they had glanced at Darwin's doctrines of development by transformation. But in April 1798 they attacked him directly in The Loves of the Triangles, a Mathematical and Philosophical Poem inscribed to Dr. Darwin. In the prose preface they connect him with the "new principles," which are but "the principles of primeval nature," first "whatever is is wrong," "that institutions civil and religious" "are so many badges of man's degradation"; second "the eternal and absolute perfectibility of man", that, if, "as is demonstrable, we have risen from a level with the cabbages of the field", we should when freed from king-craft and priest-craft rise from our "present biped state", be "as it were all mind", "feed on oxygen and never die but by our own consent". And thus they identify him with the doctrines that Godwin had formulated in his Political Justice. The Loves of the Plants, with its attempt to transmute trees and flowers into the romantic and

sentimental young men and women of the time, lay ready to the hand of the parodist; though there are some fine passages in it, such as the pathetic picture of the death of Eliza on the battlefield of Minden, and the innocent prattle of her children over her as their soldier father comes up, yet much of it is already almost an unintentional burlesque:—

> "Or mark with shining letters Kunkel's name
> In the pale phosphor's self-consuming flame.
> So the chaste heart of some enchanted maid
> Shines with insidious light, by love betrayed".

It is not surprising that the parody was so successful, and kept alive the name of the original.

4. Darwin was the leader of a circle in Lichfield that prided itself upon its literary power and advanced thought. The best known amongst these ambitious and mutually admiring thinkers and authors were Anna Seward the writer of elegies, Richard Edgeworth the father of the novelist a bohemian and erratic Irishman who followed Rousseau's doctrines, and Day the writer of Sandford and Merton. But occasional visitors and sympathisers were Dr. Priestley the revolutionary chemist and preacher, Sir Joseph Banks the naturalist, Dr. Parr the scholar, and Lord Monboddo the first believer in the descent of man from the monkey. All looked up to the speculative physician as their great cham; Johnson, who was a native of Lichfield, hated and despised him and his disciples. He had got his medical training in Edinburgh and, like Akenside and Armstrong, had acquired at that University somewhat advanced opinions. Hume and other admirers of French thought, as represented by Rousseau, Voltaire, and the Encyclopedists, had created an atmosphere of revolutionism and scepticism in the northern capital; and thence it found its way through Scotch emigrants or English medical men into London or English provincial centres. It was Edinburgh that had the first martyrs of revolutionism; and it was to Edinburgh that English revolutionists looked for their inspiration for a time. Erasmus Darwin brought the new spirit of inquiry and antagonism to the past with him to Lichfield when he settled there in 1757 at the age of 26. He was afraid to

give literary expression to his opinions till the fortune of his second wife made him independent of his profession. He was nearly fifty before he wrote his Botanic Garden. His coterie and especially Miss Seward raised a shout of applause; she described the poem as sublime; its "successive pictures alternately possess the sublimity of Michael Angelo, the correctness and elegance of Raphael, with the glow of Titian;" its "landscapes have at times the strength of Salvator, and at others the softness of Claude"; its "numbers are of stately grace and artful harmony". Hayley and even Cowper wrote poems in its praise; and Horace Walpole went into raptures over passages. And when he came to dispose of the copyright of the whole, he is said to have got ten shillings a line. Like all the didactic poems of the time, it varies its monotony by innumerable and often irrelevant episodes. His are chiefly on the triumphs of science. He is wholly materialist in his philosophy, and traces insects to the anthers of flowers, man to the oyster, and all instinct to the senses. He practically identifies animal and vegetable life. And in his prose book, Zoonomia, he says, "give me a fibre susceptible of irritation, and I will make a tree, a dog, a horse, a man". His theory is evidently evolution by transformations like that of the tadpole into the frog or that of the caterpillar into the butterfly. He was especially struck with the Linnaean system of botany and fascinated by the sexual principle which it discovered in all plant life. But he did not confine himself to botany. He sang the triumphs of engineering in a passage about Brindley, the discoveries of chemistry and physics and geology in various semi-prosaic paragraphs, and the wonders of astronomy in one fine apostrophe, in which these couplets occur;—

> "Flowers of the sky! ye too to age must yield,
> Frail as your silken sisters of the field.
> Star after star from heaven's high arch shall rush,
> Suns sink on suns and systems systems crush;
> Till o'er the wreck, emerging from the storm,
> Immortal nature lifts her changeful form".

There is real eloquence, if not real poetry, in passages like this; but he too often deals in absurd, far-fetched, and fine-spun allegory, analogy, simile, and epithet, like the

Dellacruscan school which was pilloried in Gifford's Baviad (1794), as bringing their "laboured nothings home". And it was this elaborate artificiality that made the popularity of Darwin's poems brief; it would have died out before he died in 1802 but for the Anti-Jacobin parody; and his Temple of Nature which he left to be published had little success.

## Section 11.

**1.** Satire was the true and natural function of the heroic couplet; it lent itself especially to bathos, epigram, and the mock-heroic. And it held its own for these purposes right into the nineteenth century. It came to its full heritage in a polemical time and it fits a polemical atmosphere. For it needs passion or personal epigram to give its monotonous balance fire. It lives especially in the troubled sea of politics. And yet in the second half of the century we have no great satirist like Dryden or Pope or Swift, and very little satire that was worthy to live, unless we include amongst satirists those poets who, like Goldsmith, Cowper, and Crabbe, watched the evils of human society and mourned over them in verse. The new audience was more interested in romance and sentiment, in religion and philanthropy, than in the petty jealousies and quarrels and partisanships wherein satire has its life and being. Wherever, as at the close of the century, the questions are those of national life or death, and the issues are world-wide, the passions become too deep for such an ephemeral expression of them. There was satire on the Revolution both in verse and picture; but the greater spirits, like Burke and Wordsworth and Coleridge, were too earnest to peddle in satire. Moreover the growth of journals and daily newspapers since the age of Queen Anne gave scope to much of the literary energy and talent that would have been used in satiric poems. Journalism supplied a swift popularity and easy death for all the ephemeral productions of spite or indignation or partisanship that would before have risen to the dignity of books.

**2.** The chief satirist of the time was Charles Churchill, who came to his powers just at the moment when English

politics had become a petty scramble for place, and every writer chose the weapon that was readiest to his hand. From 1760 to 1770 was the decade that was best fitted for satire in the period. George the Third had come to the throne in 1760, and almost at once he placed his old tutor and friend, Lord Bute, at the helm of affairs. Mediocrity and corruption returned to power. And no literary instrument was considered too mean to use against the king and his ministry; personal invective became the order of the day; politics and political literature became a loud hoarse squabble. It is in such a time that satire flourishes. And Churchill, who was born in 1731, discovered his talent just as it began. His boon companion and schoolfellow at Westminster, Robert Lloyd, had abandoned schoolmastering and made a great literary success with his now forgotten satire The Actor. Churchill had grown weary of his clerical profession, as his parishioners of St. John's, Westminster had grown weary of him ("sleep at his bidding crept from pew to pew" he says of himself). He set himself, therefore, to follow in his comrade's footsteps; he first adopted Swift's favourite octosyllabic verse and wrote The Bard; it could find no publisher; the same occurred with his second satire on his immediate governors, the Chapter of Westminster. Then he frequented the theatres, like Lloyd, and wrote The Rosciad (1761), a pungent and somewhat personal criticism of the actors of the day, in the style of Dryden's MacFlecknoe. It took the town, and made him famous and almost independent of his profession. He never surpassed it; for he never had such eagerness to succeed or to avoid his habitual slovenliness. And one or two passages have survived the oblivion that has overtaken his work. Of Davies;—

> "With him came mighty Davies. (On my life
> That Davies hath a very pretty wife!)
> Statesman all over! In plots famous grown!
> He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone".

Of Yates;

> "When blindly thwarting nature's stubborn plan,
> He treads the stage by way of gentleman,
> From side to side he struts, he smiles, he prates,
> And seems to wonder what's become of Yates".

Of Quin ;—

> "In whate'er cast his character was laid,
> Self still, like oil, upon the surface played".

Of Foote ;—

> "By turns transformed into all kinds of shapes,
> Constant to none, Foote laughs, cries, struts, and scrapes".

And, as in almost all his satires, he could not keep out reference to himself ; he ever tried to anticipate the natural retort on his own broad face and ugly features by self-criticism ;

> "Even I, whom nature cast in hideous mould,
> Whom, having made, she trembled to behold,
> Beneath the load of mimicry may groan,
> And find that nature's errors are my own".

His portrait of Garrick was one of the best and most generous in the satire. The actor met it with a sneer. And the satirist flung it back in his Apology to the Critical Reviewers ;—

> "Forgetful of himself he rears his head,
> And scorns the dunghill where he first was bred ;
> On this great stage, the world, no monarch e'er
> Was half so haughty as a monarch player."

The little actor replied by a feeble satire he called The Fribbleriad. But Churchill had enough to do to meet his other enemies that he had brought round his head like a swarm of mosquitoes. Foote wrote a satiric dialogue against him ; and pamphlets innumerable in reply to The Rosciad came out ; The Churchilliad, The Anti-Rosciad, The Farthing Candle, are three out of the crowd. He reserved himself for the larger quarry ; Smollett had attacked the satire in his journal The Critical Review. And in An Apology to the Critical Reviewers (1761), after acknowledging the novelist's talent as second only to Fielding's (having "hailed the honours of thy matchless name"), he takes his other work to pieces ; Smollett had himself written satires, Advice (1746), and Reproof (1747), attempted a History of England (1757), and a tragedy The Regicide (1749). Churchill laughs at him for these, but especially for the last ;

> "Others for plots and under-plots may call,
> Here's the right method—have no plot at all."

His success made him abandon his clerical dress and appear

in "blue and gold." Dean Pearce and his parishioners remonstrated; he resigned, and threw himself completely into a life of literary bohemianism and dissipation; he was free to sneer at both religion and morality. Yet in the same year (1761), we have signs of repentance and bitterness, as well as of rakishness, in his poetical epistle to Robert Lloyd, entitled "Night," which The Critical Review called "cold, long, dark, and dirty." In it he professes to flout the world and to turn the flank of its criticisms by defending open vice and contrasting with it the hypocritical virtue so common. He assumes the rôle of the manly man about town who is not ashamed of his peccadilloes, and of the manly poet and satirist who is proud of outraging poetical convention and rules of art. He delights in the freedom of his life and work;—

> "By custom safe, the poet's numbers flow
> Free as the light and air some years ago;"

(referring to the window-tax recently re-imposed);

> "No statesman e'er will find it worth his pains
> To tax our labours and excise our brains."

The poem was inspired by Armstrong's Epistle to John Wilkes, a poem called Day. And it is from this time we must date the influence of the great demagogue upon the satirist. The rebellious genius of the two brought them together as the poet and the orator of the new revolutionism. The friends of Lord Bute had begun a newspaper called The Briton; the two new allies started another called, in travesty of it, The North Briton, intended to attack the prime minister and the king who favoured him. The two chief points of attack were their nationality; the one was a Scotchman, the other was a German, by descent; and they were therefore incapable of ruling Englishmen and must be tyrants. Johnson and Junius from different camps showed the same intolerance of Scottish influence, as Swift had shown it before them. The Union had brought down to London a number of poets and place-hunters, critics and physicians to seek fortune; just as the accession of James the First had done. Ireland, Wales, North England, and the other sections of Britain had already been in the habit of contributing their best talent to the literature, politics, and professions of the great metropolis. Only the second or

third rate ability emigrated from Scotland at that time; for it had vigorous literary and professional centres of its own, in which men, like Hume and Adam Smith, Burns and Scott, found appreciative audiences. It was natural then that this hostility to Scotchmen should become a commonplace of satire in London, where so many of them seemed to succeed without much ability. Bute's influence over the king concentrated the gall. And The North Briton spent its best energies in giving it expression. Churchill devoted himself to articles in the paper; but preferred rhyme. One article on the favourite theme he recast at the last minute into verse, and issued it early in 1763 under the name of "The Prophecy of Famine; a Scottish Pastoral." His admirers thought it surpassed both Dryden and Pope; and perhaps it does approach to The Rosciad in ability; but it had its chief vogue from the popular hatred of Bute and the fear of another Jacobite rising in Scotland; some of the couplets are good;—Jockey

> "With mickle art could on the bagpipes play,
> E'en from the rising to the setting day;
> Sawney as long without remorse could bawl
> Home's madrigals and ditties from Fingal."
> "The plague of locusts they secure defy;
> For in three hours a grasshopper must die.
> No living thing, whate'er its food, feasts there,
> But the chameleon who can feast on air."

But as usual with Churchill there is more invective than wit, more personal abuse than satire. In this very poem he confesses that "no judgment tempers" him, he "boasts no merit but mere knack of rhyme," "short gleams of sense and satire out of time"; whilst "taste with contempt beholds" him "uncouth." Falconer replied by The Demagogue, not published till 1765, too late for Churchill to answer; it is as overdrawn a piece of abuse of Pitt and his champions in heroic verse; it rails at every principle that the progressive and revolutionary party respected, and joins Pitt with Wilkes as a "bellowing demagogue," who "disembogues" "expressions of immeasurable length," "splay-footed words that hector, bounce, and swagger." What enrages him most is "England shall rule America no more"; "Howl on, ye ruffians! 'Liberty and Wilkes.'"

He talks of Churchill's "clumsy club" and his "feeble meteor-ray." But before the satire could be issued Churchill had died of fever at Boulogne; he had gone to join his exiled friend Wilkes in France in October 1764.

3. Hogarth had also replied to his satire in his first print of The Times caricaturing Pitt and other Whigs. Churchill retaliated in The North Briton. On Wilkes's trial for the attack on the king in the 45th number Hogarth caricatured the demagogue. The satirist defended his friend in his Epistle to William Hogarth (1763), acknowledging the painter's talents, but attacking his opinions and weaknesses. It brought out from the artist the print of the poet as a bear in canonicals with a beer-pot in one paw and a cudgel in the other. Churchill said he was kept from retaliation by "the woman whom he loved," his last romance of vice. In The Conference (1763) he attempted to defend his character, and in one passage rises almost to pathos in the expression of remorse;—

> "'Tis not the babbling of a busy world,
> Where praise and censure are at random hurl'd,
> Which can the meanest of my thoughts control,
> Or shake one settled purpose of my soul.
> Free and at large might their wild courses roam,
> If all, if all alas! were well at home.
> No, 'tis the tale which angry Conscience tells."

He had evidently drawn swarms of enemies around him and in the turmoil he had begun to appeal for pity. But he continued his crusades; The Duellist appeared in the same year (1763), satirising a social custom that still survived times of constant warfare. He had already in 1762 attempted to laugh down a superstition, that was as hard to kill, in The Ghost, his longest poem, and in the style of Swift's octosyllabics; in this he gave a portrait of Johnson who never forgave him for it; for it was near enough to fact to strike home;

> "Pomposo, insolent and loud,
> Vain idol of a scribbling crowd,
> Whose every name inspires an awe,
> Whose every word is sense and law;"
> "Who, cursing flattery, is the tool
> Of every fawning, flattering fool;"
> "Who makes each sentence current pass,
> With 'puppy', 'coxcomb', 'scoundrel', 'ass';"

"Who, to increase his native strength,
Draws words six syllables in length".

The year in which he died was his busiest; during it he issued no less than six satires, each of some length, The Candidate, The Author, Gotham, The Farewell, The Times, and Independence. Cowper, his old schoolfellow at Westminster and his life-long defender, considered Gotham, which was a picture of the true "patriot-king", as his best, "a noble and beautiful poem". The Author is the most personal, The Times most repulsive, The Farewell almost prophetic in its appeal against the desecration of his grave, Independence most interesting as somewhat autobiographical; in this last he paints his own portrait and that not a flattering one; late in life

"He started up a fop, and, fond of show,
Looked like another Hercules turn'd beau".

This "comet of a season", as Byron calls him, in his elegy over Churchill's grave, blazed out and fell into oblivion almost as soon as the earth was over him. Devoted though he was to Wilkes, (Hogarth calls him "Wilkes's toad-echo"), the revolutionary "patriot" forgot his last wishes to write his biography, and save his memory from desecration. Lloyd, his friend, died of grief at his death, and his fiancée, Churchill's sister, died with the double shock of bereavement. The only friend that cherished his memory long was the gentle Cowper, who spoke of him as "the great Churchill", and, as late as 1782, inserted in his Table Talk a panegyric and analysis of his genius, closing thus;—

"The laurel seemed to wait on his command,
He snatched it rudely from the Muses' hand".

## Section 12.

1. But his satires continued to inspire most satiric attempts from the side of the Opposition during the rest of the century. We can see a close study of his style in the personal abuse and invective of the Letters of Junius (1769-1772), though they were in prose. His influence is apparent in the satires that Chatterton attempted. This "marvellous boy" began to write poetry when he was at school in Bristol, his native place. He sent several of his productions to Felix Farley's Bristol Journal. Many of them are

satirical and are in the octosyllabic verse of Churchill's Ghost. This poem appeared in 1763, when the charity school boy was eleven years of age. He must have been deeply impressed by its popularity. For in all his earliest satires he shows the most careful study of it. In Farley's Journal of January 7th, 1764 appeared "The Churchwarden and the Apparition," which is evidently Chattertons' and is an attack upon some churchwarden of St. Mary Redcliffe who had ordered the levelling of the churchyard and was taking the clay to make bricks; in it Conscience appears to him when he is at his ghoulish task and makes "Joe", as he is called, desist. The poem begins in the same way as Sly Dick, another satire of this same period of his life, with the description of a winter night;—

> "The night was cold, the wind was high,
> And stars bespangled all the sky".

In this latter an apparition also appears and gives Sly Dick advice. A third, Apostate Will, is in the same metre, and attacks some tradesman who veered from the Church to the Wesleyans and back to suit his pocket. Only three of his later and political satires adopt this verse, a fragment called Fables for the Court, "Journal 6th. Saturday Sept. 30th. 1769", (consisting of three pieces, one a conversation between a dean and a rector, the second a portrait of a rake, and the third an ode attacking Whitefield and his doctrines), and The Prophecy, attacking Bute and the king. All his others are in the heroic couplet and are manifestly modelled on Churchill's political poems. They are on the side of the Opposition, and adopt his principles and methods of personal abuse. They are tinged with revolutionism, make gross attacks on the character of The Princess Dowager of Wales, the widow of George the Third's father, the king, Bute, and his followers. They adopt Churchill's fury against Scotland and Scotchmen, and adore Wilkes. He refers only once to his model by name; but he imitates his rhythms, rhymes, phrases, and references. He mingles with these echoes attacks on Bristol dignitaries, and on the new objects of popular hostility, Grafton and North. They have much of the vigour of Churchill's and all their fatal fluency of verse. The most extensive is Kew Gardens, a coarse attack on the mother of George the Third

and her supposed relations to Lord Bute. It is full of asterisks for names suppressed. But he has no compunction in introducing the name of any Bristolian against whom he had felt pique;—Broderip, an organist who had turned him out of the organ-loft, Catcott, a clergyman who had told him the faults of his poems, and Bishop Newton, and Dean Barton as dogmatic authorities his natural enemies. It was written by March 1769; and he tried to get it into "a patriotic newspaper" of a printer Edmunds. But it evidently did not reach the light; for he used its 1500 lines during the last feverish months of his life as a quarry out of which he could hew new political satires. The Whore of Babylon, another attack on Lord Bute, this time without any mask of asterisks, has 600 lines from it. It is called Book the First, and was evidently intended to extend to several books. There are only one or two references to the Princess of Wales; and Mansfield, North, Colonel Luttrell, Warburton, and the Bristol church dignitaries suffer; but it is Samuel Johnson that is most severely handled, partly because Churchill had attacked him, and partly because he had accepted a pension from the Tory government; everyone who had received any favour from Bute or his friends was to him, as to Churchill, an enemy of freedom and his country. He refers to Johnson's belief in the reality of the famous Cock-lane ghost for which Churchill had laughed at the great cham; and he represents him as dead and resurrected as a ghost. Bute had "with royal favour pensioned Johnson dead"; "his ghost is risen in a venal theme".

> "Some blockhead, ever envious of his fame,
> Massacred Shakespeare in the doctor's name".

The "Rambler will no longer roam"; "released from servitude", "he'll prove it perfect happiness to drink"; Irene, his play, put the theatre asleep and "critics snor'd applause". Sawney, as he, following Churchill, calls Bute, "actuates" like a divinity, the system of things;

> "The clockwork of thy conscience turns about,
> Just as his maxims wind thee in and out."
> "Rest Johnson, hapless spirit, rest and drink.
> No more defile thy claret glass with ink."

No wonder the literary dictator of the time called him "a

vulgar, uneducated stripling", "a whelp." The echo of Churchill was too smart and too transparent. He had even caught Churchill's Voltairian sneer at Christianity, and Churchill's boast of open immorality;—

> "Woman of every happiness the best
> Is all my heaven—religion is a jest."

He seems to feel his genius and fate to have close affinity and likeness to such literary bohemians as Churchill and Savage.

> "Nay prudent neighbours (who can read) would see
> Another Savage to be starved in me."

He descends from literature and politics "to lash the ministers of God", "where Revolution's farthing candle shines", and "conscience is a prostitute for pay".

**2.** In his satire called Happiness (1769), his free thinking and free morality are still more pronounced; "opinion is the only God we know";

> "Where's the foundation of religion placed?
> On every individual's fickle taste".
> "Conscience, the soul-chameleon's varying hue,
> Reflects all notions, to no notion true".
> "The saint and sinner, fool and wise, attain
> An equal share of easiness and pain".

He laughs at "the useless bolt of vengeance" divine, and at "priestcraft" "father of misery, origin of sin". He was, like Churchill and the more advanced thinkers of his age, against all authority in the universe as well as in England. It was revolutionism moving in his blood. And for such a boy it reaches great vigour of expression in this poem. That he would, when he had reached the higher, broader views of wisdom, have developed into a genius of the foremost rank, is indicated by its satiric power and pathetic pessimism;

> "Content is happiness, as sages say—
> But what's content? The trifle of a day".
> "Since happiness was not ordained for man,
> Let's make ourselves as easy as we can".

Of a divine,

> "Praise him for sermons of his curate bought,
> His easy flow of words, his depth of thought;
> His great devotion when he drawls to pray".

Of a young scholar ;—

> " He rings bob-majors by Leibnitzian rules ".

In his Epistle to the Reverend Mr. Catcott (December 1769) he again plays with the edged tools of Voltaire and Churchill, and laughs at the same time at the clergyman's dabbling in geology and chemistry; in it there are many successful phrases and couplets ; " if angels contradict me, angels lie " ; " all have intervals of being vain " ; " we need not inspiration how to see " ; " infallibility is not for men " ; " we trample on our God, for God is earth " ;

> " If God made order, order never made
> Such nice distinctions in the preaching trade ".

In A Defence, written later in the month, he reiterates his belief in reason as our only guide, (" Religion's but Opinion's bastard son ", and the man who thinks for himself " is to himself the minister of God ".), at the same time protests against his being taken for an atheist, (" I own a God, immortal, boundless, wise."), and claims tolerance for all creeds. In " Sunday—a fragment ", and in a " Fragment ", dated October 28th. he becomes flippant if not coarse. Half of this rebellious mood was second-hand, affected to ape Churchill, half was due to his hard fate and the sensitive nature that it threatened to crush. He had a marvellous power of self-effacement, of assuming a rôle, and this, if developed, might have resulted in a great dramatic genius. As it was, it only fitted him to imitate the newest fashion amongst the revolutionists whom he most admired. In Resignation, another political satire in heroic verse, which he manufactured out of Kew Gardens, we think we hear the voice of Churchill as we read. Its seven or eight hundred lines are made up of the aptest imitations of his favourite sarcasms against Bute and scandals concerning the Princess of Wales, the Carlton Sybil, as he calls her. There are symptoms of a better ideal, an occasional picture of a scene in nature, an occasional piece of indignant eloquence ; but it is, like his model, often mean and scurrilous in professing to be manly, and personal in attempting to be witty ; and some passages would seem coarse even to last century. In The Consuliad he goes back to Pope for his model. It is a mock-heroic description of a banquet in

which political supporters of the ministry come to blows. Yet even here we feel he is but echoing Churchill. That most of his satirical opinions and tone were taken from that poet is confirmed by a look at his prose letters, which, under the signature of Decimus, he contributed to the Middlesex Journal in the early part of 1770. They are bald imitations of Junius and yet much of their material is from his inspirer; for example, he addresses one to the Princess of Gotham, that is, the Princess of Wales, in allusion to Churchill's satire "Gotham", and in it apostrophises Charles the First in terms that are taken straight from "The Candidate" and made into prose; to quote one sentence, "hadst thou died quietly and in peace, thou hadst died infamous", echoes

> "Hadst thou in peace and years resigned thy breath
> ————thy name————had been in pieces torn".

And the purpose of the apostrophe is the same—to show the evil that a woman does in standing between a monarch and a people by her lies.

3. The only use of the didactic that he made in the heroic couplet was in a descriptive poem called Clifton, remarkable only as painting his native place, and as an elegant apostrophe to the memory of a tragedian called Powell, and in two most pathetic anticipations of his death, Sentiment, some seven lines written in 1769 in defence of suicide, and the farewell satiric address to the Bristolians who had given him small loans, included in his ironical will written on April 20th, 1770, two days before he left for London; in this last there is some vigorous irony, and it breaks off with

> "Poor superstitious mortals! wreak your hate
> Upon my cold remains";

he had intended to commit suicide, but the document having been found by his master the attorney Lambert on his office desk, he was dissuaded; and he postponed the act till August 24th in the same year. In the prose of this will he says "the most perfect masters of human nature in Bristol distinguish me by the title of the Mad Genius; therefore, if I do a mad action, it is conformable to every action of my life, which all savoured of insanity"; "I give and bequeath to Mr. Matthew Mease a mourning ring with this motto 'Alas

poor Chatterton', provided he pays for it himself"; and his epitaph was to be "Reader, judge not; if thou art a Christian—believe that he will be judged by a superior Power — to that Power alone is he now answerable". There is great satiric vigour in the document; in fact, it has a strong resemblance to Hamlet's graveyard humour without imitation, although the writer was not much more than seventeen years old.

## Section 13.

1. The lighter social satire, which also prevailed at this time beside the political, had little influence on his productions. It was generally written in some other metre than the heroic couplet—often a long line in dactylic metre, and sometimes in the form of the ode. The best representative of the former was The New Bath Guide (1766) of Christopher Anstey, a tripping, witty, sometimes coarse description of the fashionable crowds that came to the wells and their amusements. It was his style and verse that Goldsmith took as his model in his lighter satires, A Haunch of Venison, and Retaliation. The latter is best represented by the satirical poems of Dr. John Wolcot (1738-1819), who wrote under the name of Peter Pindar. Though he generally rejected the old heroic couplet, and anticipating the new movement in rhythm attempted the greatest variety in verse, the mantle of Churchill really fell upon him. He shared his facility, his personality of invective, his versatility in theme, his disregard for all authority, his coarseness and bohemianism, his flippancy, and his quickness of wit. He began to write not long after the death of Churchill; but he did not begin his mock-laureateship of the people till about 1785, when, after adventures as a clergyman in Jamaica, and as a medical man in his native Cornwall, he settled in London, and issued his Odes to the Royal Academicians. He took up the rôle of Churchill in personal attack upon George the Third. Yet there was less bitterness in his satire, more of that easy good-humour, which should belong to the true bohemian. He laughed at the simplicity of the king, at his childish wonder over the obvious, at his fondness for truisms, repetitions, and questions, and at other personal

peculiarities. He generally chose an anecdote or incident in George's life and told it in varied and tripping verse ; an order that all the cooks in the palace should have their heads shaved because of a parasite found in a royal dish occasioned The Lousiad (1786), a burlesque of heroic poems ; the famous inquiry as to how the apples got inside the old wife's apple dumplings, his visit to Whitbread's brewery, and similar topics, kept Wolcot busy making London laugh. Boswell, Whitehead, the laureate, Banks the naturalist, Bruce the traveller, were other favourite themes. He poured out his burlesque odes and lyrics for thirty years, gathering them together into complete editions at intervals. And, though some of his versified anecdotes have remained favourites with provincial reciters, his work has as a whole been forgotten, so flimsy and coarse was most of it.

**2.** About the time he settled in London he had a serious rival to his claims as the successor of Churchill in The Rolliad. This was a series of Opposition satires that appeared in the newspapers during the years 1784 and 1785. They began with a burlesque criticism of an imaginary epic on Colonel Rolle ; they continued, more in Peter Pindar's style, with Probationary Odes for the Laureateship, and Political Eclogues ; and were all collected under the name of the initiatory effort. Various Whig politicians and wits contributed, such as Lord John Townsend, General Burgoyne, General Fitzpatrick, Sir R. Adair, Tickell, and George Ellis, minor poets, and Richardson a comedian. Dr. Laurence directed the crusade, and edited the collection.

## Section 14.

**1.** The success of this undertaking suggested to a small circle of literary supporters of the reactionary government of Pitt the possibility of counteracting by a similar series of satires the revolutionary doctrines and fervour so rife amongst the strongest English thinkers and writers. They started a weekly satirical paper, The Anti-Jacobin, at the close of 1797. The editor was William Gifford, who had already distinguished himself as a satirist ; but the moving

spirit was George Canning, who had just become under-secretary of state, and who was afterwards to distinguish himself so greatly as a statesman and orator; a third writer was John Hookham Frere, who afterwards translated Aristophanes, and, with his burlesque poem The Monks and The Giants (1817), gave the model to Byron for his best satires. A fourth was George Ellis, the antiquarian, who had contributed to the Whig Rolliad and who published Specimens of the Early English Poets (1790). Lord Morpeth, afterwards Earl of Carlisle, Lord Mornington afterwards Marquis Wellesley, Baron Macdonald, and a few others also contributed; but most of the paper was written by the first four, and three of these had satirical talent, that approached to genius. It is little wonder then that many of the poems promised for a time to outlive their themes.

2. The periodical started on November 20th. 1797, and appeared every Monday morning thereafter, till its vehemence of attack threatened to detach the more moderate like Wilberforce from the Government, and, at the suggestion of Pitt, who had contributed a few articles and one or two verses, it was stopped early in July 1798. The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine, a monthly, at once took its place and ran till 1821; but the old contributors were not on its staff, and it became heavy and dull. The New Anti-Jacobin Review went through three numbers in 1827, and the New Anti-Jacobin through two in 1833.

3. Nothing throws so much light on the varied and wide-spread revolutionism of the time. According to the prospectus, written by Canning, it did not confine itself to politics. It preferred "the country we live in" to France or the world; "in morals we are equally old-fashioned" and adhere to principle, and not individual tastes; "we reverence law; we acknowledge usage; we look even upon prescription without hatred or horror"; it rejected the doctrine "that every man who can divest himself of a moral sense in theory has a right to be with impunity and without disguise a scoundrel in practice"; conscientious atheism and conscientious murder it alike condemns, in short all "Jacobinism".

It intended to show up the misrepresentations of the Morning Chronicles, Morning Posts, Stars, and Couriers. And it indicated that it thought there was Jacobinism in literary style as in everything else. It objected to new experiments in poetry, and began by attacking Southey for his sapphics—unryhmed imitations of Greek verse. The second number contains the famous burlesque "The Friend of Humanity and The Knife-grinder." The sympathisers with the Revolution professed to rise above country and love Humanity; one of them meets a broken-down knife-grinder and asks him to tell his story of the tyranny that reduced him to this state;

> "Bleak blows the blast; your hat has a hole in't,
> So have your breeches!"
> "Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, sir",

the wanderer replies; he got the holes in a drunken scuffle; he never meddles with politics, and asks for a sixpence; the friend of humanity becomes indignant;

> "I give the sixpence! I will see thee damned first,
> Spiritless outcast",

and "kicks the knife-grinder, overturns his wheel, and exit in a transport of Republican enthusiasm and universal philanthropy". It was a parody of Southey's The Widow, telling the story of her vain appeal for pity and her death;

> "Worn out with anguish, toil, and cold, and hunger,
> Down sunk the wanderer; sleep had seized her senses;
> There did the traveller find her in the morning—
> God had released her."

In the prose introduction, Canning, who was the writer, explains that a Jacobin principle widely spread was "the natural and eternal warfare of the poor and rich". "A human being in the lowest state of penury and distress is a treasure to a reasoner of this cast." In the first number, Southey had been already attacked for his blank verse "Inscription for the Apartment in Chepstow Castle, where Henry Marten the Regicide was imprisoned thirty years.' "We have not been able to find one good or true poet, of sound principles and sober practice"; "good morals", and "good politics" seemed "inconsistent with the true spirit of poetry". So the writers will resort to "the Jacobin Muse" to illustrate "the principles on which the poetical

as well as the political doctrine of the New School is established," and give imitations. "The poet in all ages has despised riches and grandeur. The Jacobin poet improves this sentiment into a hatred of the rich and the great." He rejects all patriotism, and expands it "so as to comprehend all mankind". "Our poet points the thunder of his blank verse at the head of the recruiting sergeant, or roars in dithyrambics against the lieutenants of press-gangs". His muse "is betrayed by her drunken swagger and ruffian tone". The burlesque here is An Inscription for the door of the cell in Newgate where Mrs. Brownrigg, the 'Prentice-cide was confined previous to her Execution. The original runs;

> "Often have these walls
> Echoed his foot-steps, as with even tread
> He paced around his prison";

and ends;—

> "Blessed hopes awhile
> From man withheld, even to the latter days,
> When Christ shall come, and all things be fulfill'd".

The burlesque runs;—

> "Often have these cells
> Echoed her blasphemies, as with shrill voice
> She screamed for fresh Geneva",

and closes;—

> "Harsh laws! But time shall come,
> When France shall reign, and laws be all repeal'd".

This shows how indiscriminate was the attack. Every production and writer that thought of man as idealised or above his existing condition, every aspiration after something nobler, every lament over the state of the world was taken as belonging to the current of revolutionism. Southey had republican ideals, and even for a brief space thought of founding with Coleridge a socialistic community in America; but these poems that are here burlesqued have nothing in them that would not be considered to-day as the natural theme or atmosphere of poetry. So in the closing poem of the series, "The New Morality," by Canning, we have Charles Lamb quoted as a prominent republican, though he had no interest in politics or the Revolution.

> "Coleridge and Southey, Lloyd and Lamb and Co,
> Tune all your mystic harps to praise Lepaux";
> "Lepaux, whom atheists worship, at whose nod,
> Bow their meek heads the men without a God".

4. This is a long satire in the heroic couplet, attacking the French republic, its sympathisers in England, and all the doctrines that had been formulated by Godwin in his Political Justice. It attacks

> "The New Philosophy of modern times
> Sprung from that parent of ten thousand crimes";

the "New Philanthrophy",

> "beneath whose baneful sway
> Each patriot passion sinks, and dies away",

"sweet Sensibility", "sweet child of sickly Fancy", nursed by Rousseau, "to lisp the story of his wrongs and weep", and with Sterne "o'er a dead Jackass" to "pour the pearly shower", and yet to "hear unmoved of crimes, that blot the age, the world with shame", and "hope that all is for the best"; the new Freedom, the new Justice, "whose blood-stain'd book one sole decree, one statute fills, 'The People shall be free'", the new Candour; ("Thou drivelling virtue of this moral age", which finds "Black's not so black, nor white so very white",);

> "But of all plagues, good Heav'n, thy wrath can send,
> Save, save, oh! save me from the Candid Friend".

The latter half of it is an ironical invocation to Lepaux, one of the directors of the republic, with a description, (occasionally coarse), of the prominent republicans, and a eulogy of Burke.

5. The writers parody a song to British liberty by the dellacruscan Member of Parliament, Andrews, a poem by William Roscoe on the anniversary of the publication of The Declaration of Rights, the old ballad style in laughing at the Dukes of Bedford and Northumberland, who had attempted to evade the new taxation, the heroic couplets of Payne Knight's Progress of Civil Society in the witty Progress of Man, Gray's Hymn to Adversity, Darwin's Loves of the Plants in the amusing Loves of the Triangles, Glover's Admiral Hosier's Ghost, Suckling's Ode to a Lover, an ode of Catullus, and several odes of Horace.

6. By far the best are the longest, The Progress of Man, The Loves of the Triangles, and The Rovers, a burlesque of the new German plays. For they go to the very heart of

the new revolutionism. They do not attack mere sympathy with the political movements in France, but all the social, emotional, and intellectual results of the revolutionary movements. We have seen that the Anti-Jacobin connected even the new metres, the free use of blank verse, the reintroduction of the ballad, and the new use of unrhymed Greek verse with the dangerous spirit that was threatening everything established. It finds the very strongholds of literary conservatism—the long didactic poem in heroic couplet, and the light comedy—to be harbouring the new enemies of prescription and authority. Erasmus Darwin with his Linnæan idea of sexualism as penetrating into all spheres of life, and Payne Knight with his Rousseauish belief in the simplicity and happiness of natural society, and adoption of Godwin's belief in the perfectibility of human nature if conventions and laws and governments were stripped off it, appropriated the old heroic couplet and didactic purpose; whilst Benjamin Thomson, afterwards the famous scientist, Count Rumford, and Sheridan the famous theatrical manager, comedy-writer, and revolutionary orator, had translated The Stranger, a sentimental comedy from the German Kotzebue, choosing the prose form of Steele and Goldsmith intermixed with lyric. The whole of English literary power seemed drifting over to the side of revolution; and the new military genius Buonaparte seemed as if he were about to carry the new principles into every corner of Europe. Something had to be done to help Pitt and the reactionary government in their endeavour to stem this torrent of revolutionism. Canning was the man, who saw, how protean was the new movement, how its spirit penetrated all the new English literature, and in these three satires, and The New Morality, of which he was the chief author, he tried to ridicule it in all its phases; the other verses of the Anti-Jacobin never get beneath the surface; they laugh at its minor incidents and political results. What he failed to see was that the movement had begun more than half a century before in English literature, and that, though the reactionary government of which he was a member might by the military achievements of its armies postpone political reform a whole generation, revolutionism was to mould English thought and literature during the

whole succeeding period and make them great. His keenness of vision is most apparent in detecting the hated spirit in the sentimental and romantic movements, in the utilitarian ethics of Jeremy Bentham, in the new scientific view of man as a portion of the animal creation and linked to the vegetable creation by many habits and instincts, in the socialistic view of marriage as a bondage invented by priests and politicians, and in the influx of the new German literature. In The Progress of Man love is shown to penetrate all nature; it

> "Cools the crimpt cod, fierce pangs to perch imparts,
> Shrinks shrivelled shrimps, but opens oyster's hearts";
> "The same with plants—potatoes 'tatoes breed,
> Uncostly cabbage springs from cabbage seed";

man only

> "Starts from his rank and mars creation's plan";
> "Resigns his native rights for meaner things,
> For faith and fetters, laws and priests and kings".

He learns the taste for blood "and millions perish that a king may reign"; marriage in the South Seas is described as seen by Captain Cook; "no hireling Bonzes chant the mystic rite"; whereas in Britain,

> "One man with one unceasing wife
> Plays the long rubber of connubial life".

The quotation from the poem closes with praise of Kotzebue's play, as recently translated, calling it "The Reformed Housekeeper".

> "On household cares intent with many a sigh
> She turns the pancake and she moulds the pie".

The Loves of the Triangles pursues the topic of the slavery of marriage and the universality of love;—

> "Nor you, ye legion friends of Church and Law,
> Pollute these pages with unhallowed paw!"
> "For you no tangents touch, no angles meet,
> No circles join in osculation sweet".

The loves of the various mathematical figures are pursued through all their devious romance;

> "Wanton Optics roll the melting eye";
> "Alas that partial Science should approve
> The sly Rectangle's too licentious love".

Nor does the course of Parabola's or Hyperbola's love run smooth. So, in "happy France"

> " Reform greets Terror with fraternal kiss " ;
> " Where mild Philosophy first taught to scan
> The wrongs of Providence and Rights of Man ".

The Republican Directorate comes as the climax. Isosceles wooes " coy Mathesis " ;

> " Where'er he moves, she sees his tall limbs trace
> Internal angles equal at the base ;
> Again she doubts him, but produced at will
> She sees th' external angles equal still ".

At last " blest Isosceles " leads " the enamoured maid " to " the Asses' Bridge ". This suggests London Bridge and the crowds that sail under it, " Lodi's blood-stained Bridge ", with young Freedom gazing at it, and the floating frame with the guillotine intended for the invasion of England and the decapitation of Pitt.

**8.** In The Rovers Canning turns to the German stage, and especially Schiller's Robbers, which sent " the whole of a German university on the highway ", his Cabal and Love, which attacked prime ministers and reigning dukes, Goethe's Stella, " which ends by placing a man bodkin between two wives," and Kotzebue's Stranger, where " to two swains one nymph her vows " gives. In the prose introduction, Mr. Higgins, the professed author, says, that, if the play " has a proper run, it will do much to unhinge the present notions of men with regard to the obligations of civil society ", give them " a contemptuous disgust at all that is ", and " set them about doing what they like, where they like, when they like, and how they like ". " Destroy the frame of society, and see the elements fighting one against another— every man for himself, (stripped of prejudice, of bigotry, and of feeling for others), against the remainder of his species ; and there is then some hope of a totally new order of things." " The German theatre appears to proceed on this judicious plan ". Germany had imbibed revolutionism from France, and turned it into a form suited to the middle classes, " painted the beauties of forgery in glowing colours ", and " showed that the presumption of virtue is in favour of rapine and occasional murder on the highway ". The moral of The Rovers is that of German dramas, " the reciprocal duties of one or more husbands to one or more wives and to the children who may happen to arise out of

this complicated and endearing connection"; "I have omitted only the swearing to which English ears are not yet sufficiently accustomed". It was in short an attack on the German "Illuminati", who had adopted the principles of French scepticism and revolutionism. The Prologue is in heroic couplets; but the play itself is in prose. In the first act Matilda Pottinger, who is in search of Casimere, the father of some of her children, and Cecilia Muckenfield on the same errand, meet at an inn in Weimar and embrace; Casimere also arrives; whilst Rogero, who had been immured for his love for Matilda, is shown soliloquising in his dungeon, "where patience beside the bottomless pool of despondency sits angling for impossibilities", he says, and singing his song which ends with Pitt's verse;—

> "Sun, Moon, and thou vain World, adieu,
> That king and priests are plotting in;
> Here doomed to starve on water gru-
> el never shall I see the U-
> niversity of Gottigen."

In the second act young Pottinger, Matilda's brother, arrives at Weimar in search of her, and meets Puddingfield and Beefington, two English exiles, who have just heard of the signing of the Magna Charta. The third act is omitted and is only described as repeating the final double arrangement of Goethe's Stella. In the fourth or last Casimere and the two Englishmen join the waiter, who is a Knight Templar in disguise, and young Pottinger, in freeing Rogero. In one speech of Casimere there is a manifest reference to Goethe's Werther, and this famous novel is clearly meant to be ridiculed in the amorous tangle, the exaggerated despair, and the overdrawn expression of sentiment.

## Section 15.

1. The Anti-Jacobin thus points out by its satire the chief influences that were to mould nineteenth century literature and the chief currents of thought and feeling that were to flow through its greatest productions. It was Canning who thus raised the satire above mere temporary interests. Yet it was probably Gifford who directed his attention to the new translations of German plays and their popularity, (three different English versions of The Stranger

appeared at this time). For he had in 1795 attacked them in his Mæviad, a satire in heroic couplets modelled on Horace, characterising them as "lumbering, monotonous stupidity." But his chief satiric interest had been in the style of the Dellacruscan school of poetry, which had attempted dramas as well as odes, elegies, and didactic poems. This is clear when we turn to his Baviad (1794), which, paraphrasing Persius, deals wholly with this new poetic degeneration.

**2.** One of the most singular phenomena in English poetry was the sudden appearance in 1785 of a mania for writing silly sentimentalism in the shape of sonnets, odes, and elegies. It started with the English colony in Florence. Mrs. Piozzi, the friend of Dr. Johnson, was the best known amongst them; most of the names have passed into oblivion. But they gathered their productions into The Florence Miscellany. They grew so proud of their mutual admiration society and its verses that they soon began to publish them in the English newspapers. A Mr. Robert Merry brought over the contagion to England, and, by a sonnet to love, inoculated the readers of The World newspaper with it. Another newspaper The Oracle, caught the epidemic, and for some years it raged in the two. Merry had signed himself Della Crusca from the name of the famous Florentine Academia della Crusca, devoted to the compilation of a dictionary, and to new editions of the Italian poets. Another mutual admiration circle of verse-writers sprang up, and, adopting names, which they thought as romantic as Della Crusca, kept up a continual volley of sentimental panegyrics; they took most of their pseudonyms from the fiction of the time. The chief of them were Mrs. Hannah Cowley, the dramatist, author of "A Bold Stroke for a Husband", Mrs. Robinson, the actress, Countess Cowper, a Mr. Parsons, a Mr. Greathead, a Mr. Williams, a Mr. Adney, a Mr. Weston, a Mr. Jerningham; their poetic names were Anna Matilda, Laura Maria, Edwin, Orlando, Arley, Bertie, Pasquin, Yenda. The phenomenon was to some extent a phase of Wertherism; Goethe's Sorrows of the Young Werther (1774) had made tears and sentimental suicide fashionable. The latent revolutionism that could

not find vent in politics or war sought it in literary weeping and sentiment. Of course it had already found this expression in Richardson's novels, in Rousseau's Julie, and even in the Vicar of Wakefield. But Werther brought it to a head. Hundreds, who felt the poetic sentiment and the tendency to tears, persuaded themselves that they had the burden of the world's sorrow upon them and also the genius for poetry. It was the Florentine emigrants that opened the sluicegates; and everyone who could fit rhymes longed to commit suicide in verse or drop a poetic tear upon a suicide's grave. The most artificial feeling and imagery came into vogue, and hid from the writers the fact that they were writing nonsense. The epidemic spread into other circles. Erasmus Darwin and the Lichfield set, including Miss Seward, felt its effects; and most of the women-writers of the day and most of the novelists were touched by the fashion. Of course it had much that was symptomatic of the coming age in it; there was much emotional appeal to nature, if not insight into it; it was the precursor of the passionate expression of Shelley, Keats, and Byron; and the last began his career with his Hours of Idleness, consisting of lyrics that were not far off the Dellacruscan; it drew poetry from the didactic to the lyrical and the emotional; it roused interest in the romance of love. But it had its falsetto notes; it exaggerated passion, preferred the morbid, filled its writers with conceit, and substituted a new conventional language and imagery for the old. On one side, the form, it was the last term of the decay of the Pindaric ode of the Gray and Collins school; on the other, it was the first premonition of a poetic revolution. John Bell, the publisher of The World, gathered the poems into two volumes called The British Album. And the only item of the collection that has survived is the song, "Wapping old Stairs", by Mr. Parsons; doubtless it survived because it chose a lower plane of life and language than the others.

3. Gifford had a splendid field for satire in the book and the fashion that produced it. And he wrote his Baviad just at the turning of the tide. The new audience were beginning to be tired of the iteration of threadbare sentiments; the British public were beginning to fear

the revolutionism that they had so long toyed with, and the political reaction was about to set in. Wordsworth and Coleridge were writing their Lyrical Ballads, and Southey was giving expression to real passion. Verses like these, then, were the natural prey of the satirist;—

"Thou couldst the tear of rapture weep,
And feed on agony, and banish sleep".
"Then point where on the sod his tear
Fell from its crystal source so clear,
And there my mingling tear may sink
And the same dust its moisture drink."
"Disordered, lost, from hill to plain I run,
And with my mind's thick gloom obscure the sun".
"Summer tints begemm'd the scene
And silky ocean slept in glossy green".
"And gauzy zephyrs, fluttering o'er the plain,
On twilight's bosom drop their filmy rain".
"the explosion came,
And burst the o'er-charged culverin of shame".
"O better were it ever to be lost
In black negation's sea than reach the coast".

The Baviad did not burlesque, (the poems were already burlesque,) but poured invective, scorn, and indignation upon their authors in the style of Churchill with a touch of Pope. It is in dialogue between a mild defender of the school and the poet himself. Like the Anti-Jacobin, it is not very discriminating in its attack, classifying with the Dellacruscans Morton and Holcroft, the dramatists and actors, and Kemble, the antiquarian and historian. It seems also to satirise prose of the Johnsonian type, choosing Beaufoy's travels in Africa as the specimen;

"There Fezzan's thrum-capped tribes, Turks, Christians, Jews,
Accommodate, ye Gods! their feet with shoes.
There meagre shrubs inveterate mountains grace,
And brushwood breaks the amplitude of space".

But it is the Dellacruscan poetry it ridicules chiefly; "Topham's fustian", "Reynolds' flippant trash", "Andrews' doggerel", "Greathead's idiot line", "Bertie's namby-pamby madrigals of love", "Cowley's ding-dong chime", "Thrale's laboured nothings", "canker'd Weston's loathsome rhymes", and "Merry's Moorfields whine". The Dellacruscans evidently considered that they were more modern and "sweet" than Pope; their "tender strains" called "for the moist eye, bow'd head, and

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lengthened drawl". For Gifford apologises to the memory of Pope for such desecration. He also sets "Burns' pure healthful nurture" against this sickly and often prurient sentiment, this "metromania".

> "Now fools and children void their brains by loads,
> And itching grandams spawl lascivious odes".

The morbid fashion spread to the aristocracy, to "lords and dukes cursed with a sickly taste". The movement was manifestly connected with that amongst women for the acquisition of the learning of men; for Gifford describes a meeting at Mrs. Piozzi's house, where the Dellacruscans weep over and applaud a poem called "The Wreath of Liberty";

> "With lemonade he gargles first his throat
> Then sweetly preludes to the liquid note".
> "The summons her blue-stocking friends obey
> Lur'd by the love of Poetry—and tea".

The "abortive thoughts", "truth sacrificed to letters", "sense to sound", false glare, "incongruous images", "noise and nonsense", that marked the school, were combined with all the forward movements of the time, all that might be called revolutionism. He even connects with it the new fashion of studying and reviving the oldest English literature. He afterwards himself edited the plays of Massinger, Ford, Shirley, and Ben Jonson. But that was after the study of older English literature had come to be completely established. When he wrote The Baviad, conservatism, stirred by the Revolution, was militant, and attacked everything that departed from the fashion established by the age before. Hence his laughter at the harmless study of books that preceded the period of Dryden and Pope.

## Section 16.

1. But he was right in affiliating this to revolutionism. It was the study of the older literature that was to overthrow the dominion of the Queen Anne writers, and give new scope to poetic imagination. It was this study that was to change the face of English literature, and make his own work old-fashioned. In the Quarterly Review, of which he was editor from its starting in 1808 till his death in 1826, he

kept up the crusade against all who gave expression to the new spirit and taste, or who followed the older poets in looking into nature direct—Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, Hazlitt, Hunt. He came himself from the new audience; he was the son of a small tradesman in Devonshire (born 1756), and was sent to Oxford somewhat late in life; Lord Grosvenor befriended him, and he repaid the kindness by devoting all his talents to reaction in poetry, criticism, and politics; he adopted the style and canons of the Queen Anne period, and struggled all his life, by aid of its somewhat virulent weapons too, against their inevitable effacement. His criticism, like his Baviad and his Maeviad, and the Anti-Jacobin, was destined to become as antiquated as the ideas and poetry that he defended.

2. The reactionary crusade that he conducted was not natural to him, if we are to judge by his appreciation of Burns. Had he followed his natural bent, and looked to the signs of the times in the poetry of Chatterton and Blake, Cowper and Burns, he would have seen that the artificial standards of the earlier part of the century were about to pass away; he would not have spent his time on such a temporary form as Queen Anne satire. All the currents of poetry that we have already traced in the period, though full of indications of the coming time, were of the immediate past, and were about to vanish. Those that were to flow on through the new age, through the nineteenth century, had their sources in an older past, in a past that was nearer to the natural fountains of national greatness. It was the Elizabethan literature that was to mould the new passion; and it was even older literature (the floating débris of an unwritten literature, the popular ballads and songs, the tales and legends of a half-mythical Celtic past,) that was to give the deepest impulse to the literary spirit. All that was nearer to the springs of the feeling and imagination of the people, to the new and larger audience, was certain to reappear in poetry as soon as the Revolution had emancipated the popular element. The Cavalier, Restoration, and Queen Anne literature was written to please a small section of the court, an aristocracy, that to some extent belonged ethnographically, like most of the aristocracies of Central

and Northern Europe, to a smaller-skulled, stronger-willed race than the bulk of the people. The large-brained race, that had come so much to the surface after the Reformation by means of the drama and the struggle with the Armada, was about to come to its own again in English literature and English national life. Thanks to the industrial movement, and the torrent of revolutionism that flowed through Europe, it was to mould the imagination of England into truly national forms. Even the aristocracy, which was however recruited from its wealth, was to abandon its old hunting and military pursuits, and to write and exercise the arts for it. Hence it was that poetry went back for its models and inspiration to the older English literature.

## Section 17.

**1.** But it was certain to make false starts, to attempt forms of the old that would not suit the new. One of these was Spenserianism. Cowley, Dryden, and Pope professed to have studied Spenser as their master; but we see little or no trace of him in their poetry. It is not till Shenstone's Schoolmistress (1742) that we get clear marks of imitation of the great Elizabethan poet. And these marks are combined with such a sympathetic insight into nature, and a Dutch minuteness of study of lowly human nature, as anticipate the coming age. Shenstone (1714-1763) was a true student of the older literature, as is shown by his exquisite Pastoral Ballad (1743), which has caught the true tone of the pastoral poetry of Robert Greene, George Wither, and William Browne, even though it is in a new, tripping, anapaestic measure, and by his ballad of Jemmy Dawson (1747), which has something of the ballad simplicity, although on a contemporary topic. His poetry, taken as a whole, is, like that of Collins and Gray, a singular medley of the Queen Anne age and the age of Cowper and Burns, of the artificial and the natural. On every page stand side by side the influence of Pope and that of the new audience. His Songs and Ballads are all mere pastoral artificialities, like those of Gay and Prior, except Jemmy Dawson, which was written towards the close of his life, when he was assisting Percy to gather his Reliques of

Ancient Poetry. His Odes prepared the way for Gray, as for example in Rural Elegance written in 1750, and yet are tinged with pseudo-classicism. His Moral Pieces are half Popian, half like Thomson; The Judgment of Hercules (1741) is in heroic couplet, and, though touched with the love of nature that runs through The Seasons, has more of the didacticism of the Essay on Man; Economy, The Ruined Abbey, and Love and Honour are in blank verse; but the balance of the rhymed couplet guides the ear that wrote them; the Progress of Taste, the longest and the most interesting, is in the octosyllabic couplet of Swift; it is autobiographic, describing the development of the poet's mind, and, his usual topic, the narrowness of his fortunes; it is full of Naiads and Dryads, Damon and Delia, the Muses and Apollo, and all the other classical conventionalities of the Queen Anne poetry; but there is a grace, an appreciation of natural beauty, and a simple feeling that anticipate the new time. His Levities, or Pieces of Humour, are mere imitations of the society verses of Prior and Gay. It is his Elegies that, in spite of their false echoes of Virgil's Eclogues, are fullest of his long intercourse with nature, whilst he was transforming his father's farm, The Leasowes, into a garden; they are deeply tinged with the melancholy of a man, who, whilst loving the country, still sighed for the city, who felt that, ambitious though he was, he was to live and die in his birthplace; all through them he repines at the limits of fortune, and yet girds at the great and wealthy, and praises simplicity; he mourns over the sorrows of life, ("how soon the pleasing novelty of life is o'er"), the estrangement of a friend, untimely death, posthumous reputation, and yet, content with what he is, he will not go abroad. They are in the same metre as Gray's famous Elegy, and often anticipate its mournful sentiments and melody of lamentation. In the eleventh elegy, for example, he bewails the evanescence of youth's dream;—

> "Ah me, my friend! it will not, will not last!
> This fairy scene that cheats our youthful eyes;
> The charm dissolves; the aerial music's past;
> The banquet ceases and the vision flies."
> "Where are the splendid forms, the rich perfumes,
> Where the gay tapers, where the spacious dome?
> Vanished the costly pearls, the crimson plumes,
> And we delightless left to wander home."

In the thirteenth, he tries to reconcile an estranged friend and asks whether, if they met abroad, they would not clasp each other's hand;—

> "Life is that stranger land, that alien clime;
> Shall kindred souls forego their social claim?
> Launched in the vast abyss of space and time,
> Shall dark suspicion quench the generous flame?
> "Then the keen anguish from thine eye shall start,
> Sad as thou follow'st my untimely bier;
> 'Fool that I was—if friends so soon must part,
> To let suspicion intermix a fear'".

There is a personal note in them, and a pastoral note as well, that do not belong to Gray's poem; and unlike it, they often fall into the prosaic, if not into bathos, as when he devotes the eighteenth to a "lamentation over the state of the woollen manufactory", and meditates in the twenty-first on the character of the ancient Britons, "written at the time of a rumoured tax upon luxury" (1746). In spite of their blemishes, they were the forerunners of Gray's Elegy, and gave the sentiment, theme, metre, and often the imagery and melody to that masterpiece. Johnson "damns them with faint praise"; ("wanting combination, they want variety"; "the lines are sometimes smooth and easy"; "his diction is often harsh, improper, and affected"; "his words ill-coined or ill-chosen"); and most critics since have echoed his opinion. Burns is nearer the mark when he says, "His divine elegies do honour to our language, our nation, and our species"; the Scotch poet shows in his laments and songs traces of close study of them. But it is The Schoolmistress that moulded The Cottar's Saturday Night, and has kept his name alive. Gilbert West's On the Abuse of Travelling (1739), a poem much praised by Gray, had preceded it in date of publication as a Spenserian poem in Spenserian stanza. But Shenstone is said to have written his poem at Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1736. The combination of quaint humour and sympathetic observation, of archaic expression and modern realism of art, of sounding heroic verse and homely theme, made it a favourite all through the following century; only recently has it fallen into neglect. It takes the would-be elevated standpoint of a student at college, and, softening the sublimity by a touch of humour and of loving reminiscence, paints the

portrait of the dame under whose birch the poet in his boyhood had doubtless often suffered; there is indeed too much of the birch in the poem as there probably was in the school, although humour and pathos interchange upon the subject. The picture of the "unruly brats" in school and out of it is masterly andsympathetic;

> "They grieven sore in piteous durance pent,
> Aw'd by the power of this relentless dame,
> And ofttimes on vagaries idly bent,
> For unkempt hair, or unconn'd talk, are sorely shent."

The Spenserisms, which he deliberately adopts, are, like all the eighteenth century reproductions of the past, loose and inaccurate. So his imitation of Spenser's "simplicity" and "peculiar tenderness of sentiment" is marred by the self-conscious spirit that belongs to all the poetic art of the Queen Anne period; he adopts the mock-heroic and thus departs completely from the atmosphere of the Elizabethan poet.

**2.** The Castle of Indolence (1746) came four years after The Schoolmistress, and, though less archaic, is nearer to Spenser; it is allegorical, it narrates the allegory as adventures of knights, it introduces fiends and wonderful castles and dungeons, and its diction does not rise so far above its theme. Yet there is the taint of the Queen Anne mock-heroic in it. Thomson (1700-1748) is conscious that, in painting the horrors and downfall of Indolence the magician and the victory of Sir Industry and his bard in the British isles, he will arouse the laughter of the city wits, who all know his indolent habits; and so he tries to disarm their jests by introducing burlesque portraits of himself and some of his friends as inmates of the castle, "a bard more fat than bard beseems", "who loathéd much to write, ne caréd to repent", and "a little round, fat, oily man of God", with "a roguish twinkle in his eye"; his pictures of the scenes upon "this ant-hill earth", viewed in the "huge, crystal, magic globe" of vanity, of "the muckworm" at his desk with his "scoundrel maxims", the "gaudy spendthrift heir"—"the silly tenant of the summer air", the authors "scrawling and scribbling" "to be praised" "when they can hear no

more", the politicians "shrugging the important shoulder", when,

> "crown'd their cares,
> In comes another set and kicketh them downstairs",

the "most Christian kings" "with honourable ruffians in their hire", "the languid beauties", ("their only labour was to kill the time and labour dire it is and weary woe"), Lethargy, Hydropsy, ("still he drank and yet he still was dry"), Hypochondria, "mother of spleen", Beggary, and Scorn, have all a touch of satire, if not caricature, in them. In his prose Advertisement he shows that he adopts archaisms to give a quaint, and perhaps absurd, air to the poem; "The obsolete words and a simplicity of diction in some of the lines border on the ridiculous". Yet it is so much influenced by the new currents of poetic inspiration that it is, at least in its first book, the best and most modern of Thomson's work. His Seasons come close to it in attractiveness. But his long blank verse epic called Liberty, (1735-1737), an historical account of the growth of freedom, his Britannia (1727), his tragedies, Sophonisba (1727), Agamemnon (1738), Edward and Eleonora (1739), Tancred and Gismunda (1745), Coriolanus (posthumous), all in blank verse, and his odes and songs, are frigid and uninteresting compared with this. His best effort is his last and his most imitative. Shenstone and he caught the first inspiration of the new study of the older past, and, like most pioneers, took the wrong track. Few poets followed them in their choice of a model; the stanza had to be modified and made lighter, and the archaisms had to be abandoned, before it could be moulded to the serious passion of the nineteenth century by Burns and Shelley and Keats, or to satire by Byron.

3. The only followers of these Spenserians in the eighteenth century were two Scotchmen, William Julius Mickle (1734-1788), the translator of the Lusiad (1775), and best known as the writer of the ballad "Cumnor Hall", and the song "There's nae luck about the house", and James Beattie (1735-1803), the logic professor in Aberdeen, and the author of a piece long well-known to school-books and recitation-books—The Hermit. Mickle's Spenserian attempt was first published under the name of The

Concubine (1767), but in later editions, Syr Martyn ; it goes farther than even The Schoolmistress in archaisms. Beattie's Minstrel (1771, revised and continued 1774), threw off almost all archaisms in its use of the stanza of Spenser. According to the author's prose preface, he "endeavoured to imitate Spenser in the measure of his verse and in the harmony, simplicity, and variety of his composition", and this because it seemed "from its gothic structure and original to bear some relation to the subject and spirit of the poem"; it allowed "the sententiousness of the couplet as well as the more complex modulation of blank verse." But subject and verse were the result and symptom of the return to the far past for inspiration. The poem professes "to trace the progress of a poetical genius born in a rude age", till he appears "as a minstrel". And the alternative title, "The Progress of Genius", seems to show that it might have anticipated Wordsworth's Prelude. But it is more a series of pictures of nature, and of a youth conversant with nature than the narrative which it promises to be at its beginning. The son of a shepherd, Edwin, listens to the tales and ballads by the fire-side, and communes with nature without, and in the Second Book, he comes across a hermit-sage, who intends to teach him all the secrets of philosophy and science. But the poem closes before the course of tuition has rightly begun. There is the method of Akenside in it, metaphysics mingled with the picturesque, and there are innumerable echoes of Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Gray's Elegy, and even of Goldsmith's Traveller, and Deserted Village. Yet the result is a true product of the new poetic sentiment that was arising with the expansion of the audience. One of the finer stanzas will reveal this characteristic ;—

> "But who the melodies of morn can tell?
> The wild brook babbling down the mountain-side,
> The lowing herd, the sheepfold's simple bell,
> The pipe of early shepherd, dim descried
> In the lone valley, echoing far and wide
> The clamorous horn along the cliffs above !
> The hollow murmur of the oceantide,
> The hum of bees, the linnet's lay of love,
> And the full choir that wakes the universal grove".

His other poems are echoes of Gray or Collins, Odes to

Peace and Hope, full of personified abstractions, Retirement in short-lined stanzas, The Triumph of Melancholy, The Judgment of Paris an Elegy, all in the verse and style of Gray's Elegy, another Elegy in the heroic couplet, and an invective against Churchill in the same, one or two fables in Gay's octosyllabic verse, and a translation of Virgil's Eclogues in the verse and style of Pope.

## Section 18.

**1.** It was out of the Gothic revival that he grew; he often speaks of his "Gothic lyre". So too did Gray, in spite of his perpetual appeal to classical precedent, affiliate to the new renaissance. He addressed an academic audience, as so many poets of this period did, in place of the audience of London coffee-house critics that Dryden and Pope had appealed to. He lived all his literary life in Cambridge, the only breaks being a long Continental journey with Horace Walpole early in youth (1739-1741), a trip into Scotland in 1765, and one to the English lakes in 1769. And this life he spent in reading, at first classics, but afterwards history, travel, science, philosophy, and modern literature, and in writing the few poems that he has left. It was the academic standard that was in his mind whenever he put pen to paper, and that is ever conservative; if it reaches beyond the studies of the universities, it is only as far as the literature of the vanishing age. Dryden and Pope were thus bound to fetter the imagination of Gray.

**2.** But he was also conscious of the new audience; his mother and aunts, whom he deeply loved, and whom he kept visiting at Stoke near Windsor till their death, belonged to it in all their sympathies; and from this source welled in upon his spirit the natural influences of the new sentiment, the love of national literature, and even the sympathy with the lowly and obscure that was one of the main elements of the nascent revolutionism. His Elegy in a Country Churchyard was the unobstructed expression of this phase of his life; we can almost feel each stanza being moulded amid the graves of Stoke church for the loving maternal ear that listens for his return in the evening; there is in it none

of the learning that usually choked his utterance ; and in the revision of the poem, he substituted Hampden, Milton, Cromwell, in one famous stanza for Cato, Tully, and Caesar, and thus threw out the only classicism ; there is little of the pseudo-classicism of the Queen Anne poetry. It is full of the sentiments and emotions, the reflections and maxims, that had become the commonplaces of middle class households. And his fine ear and imagination, and his long training enabled him to give these the simplest and most melodious, nay, the final expression. Hence its complete absorption into the consciousness of the new audience, its adoption as almost the secular hymn of the middle class. How nobly it expresses their sense of the beauty of nature and especially of "parting day", the time sacred to happy yet sad reflection amongst all who have their recurrent labour ! Then comes that poetry of reminiscence which was so to commend Goldsmith to the hearts of the new audience, the sense of the far past linked to the present by graves, of the long slumber of death, of the everlasting farewell that the mourner too must soon bid to the open-air sounds and employments and to the loved hearth. He anticipates the poetry of Crabbe, and rebukes the condescension that would smile at "the short and simple annals of the poor". He has learned the democracy of death that heeds no flattery or courtiership. Nay, it is only occasion that has drawn the seeming gulf between world-striking genius and the "celestial fire" hidden in village bosoms. The necessity of substituting an English name for Caesar's drove him into the traditional injustice to Cromwell's memory, which Carlyle disposed of. His own love of solitude makes him yearn for the rustic way of life. He has only "the passing tribute of a sigh" for the unlettered epitaphs on rustic tombs. They tell him of the sadness of last farewells. And the personal note enters in with the emotion ; he thinks of the mother from whom he must for ever part before long. The thought of himself laid to sleep "beneath some mouldering heap", unconscious of his loved ones, overcomes him, and he closes with the ideal story of his death and burial told by "some hoary-headed swain", and his own epitaph. Much as he depreciated this as compared with his other efforts, it is his

only masterpiece, his only poem that appeals to the undying heart of humanity. His sympathy with the new time and the new audience led him to the perennial sources of human emotion, and made him reject all the suggestions of obtrusive learning and wit, all that would mar the simplicity. Whilst his training in the great literatures of culture, and especially in the school of Pope, enabled him to polish the verse into its most melodious, and yet epigrammatic, form. With all the critics of the third quarter of the eighteenth century it placed him in the front rank of English poets. The complete victory of the Lake school and their amalgamation of poetry and philosophy overshadowed his fame. But in Shelley, Keats, and Byron we see his influence again Whilst in The Scholar Gipsy and the Thyrsis of Matthew Arnold we hear the melody and even the phrases of the Elegy echo.

3. It had not been his first attempt. During his tour with Walpole he wrote most of his Latin poems. His literary outset in English was a tragedy in the style of Addison's Cato, called Agrippina; he proposed to make it a sequel to Racine's Britannicus; he never got farther than a scene and a fragment of the first act. His instinct and his friend West were against its continuance. It is pseudo-classical, stiff, and formal blank verse. His first true revolt against the monotony of the Queen Anne verse was in his Ode to Spring in 1742, when, after his Continental tour, he had returned to Stoke. Yet it has many of the conventional touches of Pope. Two other odes that he wrote in this year, that On a Distant Prospect of Eton College, and that On Adversity, have more promise of his own peculiarly dignified music. Neither of them is marked by any depth of thought or nobility of language; they are memorable only for their poetry of reminiscence and sadness, and for a few felicitous expressions; "his silver-winding way" referring to the Thames, "slow-consuming Age", and the two now hackneyed quotations "And snatch a fearful joy" and

> "where ignorance is bliss,
> 'Tis folly to be wise".

Though Wordsworth somewhat discounted Gray's fame, his famous Ode to Duty, beginning "stern daughter of the

voice of God", has evidently drawn its inspiration from Gray's second ode. The chief fault in both these early poems is the use of personified abstractions, Anger, Fear, Folly, Justice, against which the Lake poets made their chief protest. The same fault mars the odes that Collins wrote some three years after, and published in 1746, all unconscious of Gray's efforts in the same direction, which did not appear till 1747. There was in all the poetry of the second quarter of the century a strong bent towards metaphysics, a love of abstractions and abstract subjects. It was the result on the one side of the generalising epigrammatic movement in Queen Anne poetry, and on the other of the controversial fervour of the time. Poetry had to resort to the picturesque statement of generalities and first principles in order to be original. Pope, Akenside, Young, Thomson, Armstrong were all engaged at this time on would-be poetic philosophy in blank verse or the heroic couplet. The monotony of this drove these two forerunners of the new poetry into revolt; they developed the Pindaric ode, that had been a petrified form of poetry since Cowley's attempts, into a striking but irregular melody; but the metaphysical abstractions of their own time clung to them. The Elegy, which was begun in 1742, but not finished till 1750, is also marred by these personifications, Honour, Contemplation, Science, Melancholy. His Hymn to Ignorance (1742) and Alliance of Education and Government (1750) were posthumous fragments, that, by their use of the heroic couplet, the one for mock-heroic, and the other for didactic purpose, show how closely he was bound to the Queen Anne age, as also does his unfinished Latin poem De Principiis Cogitandi (1741). Dodsley published his Eton Ode in 1747, and again in 1748 included it and the Ode to Spring and the mock-heroic On Mr. Walpole's Cat in his Collection of Poems. In 1751 his Elegy appeared; it became at once popular and went through a dozen editions in 1752. In March of that year all the poems mentioned were published along with another society poem A Long Story in one volume with illustrations. His Ode on the Pleasure arising from Vicissitude in the same style as that on Adversity and containing one or two felicities was written in 1753, but not printed till after his death.

4. It was in this latter period that he began to surrender himself to the full current of the romantic movement. He had only been dimly conscious of its beginning before this, although he had given such full expression to one phase of it in his Elegy. He did not abandon his classical studies and precedents, but he devoted himself to the older literature and legends of his country. He contemplated a history of English poetry; but, when he heard of Warton's similar project, he handed over his notes to him. His studies bore better fruit—his two famous Pindaric Odes, The Progress of Poesie (1754), and The Bard issued along with it in 1757. They rank next to his Elegy in popularity, in melodious approach to the tone of modern poetry, and in measured dignity of language. They are both strictly Pindaric in form, having strophe, antistrophe, and epode in each stanza, and they are both unities in their art. The one describes in a picturesque way, and with many beautiful passages and expressions, the birth of the poetic art and its development in Greece, Italy, and Britain; in it occur phrases that have become the current coin of literature; of Shakespeare

> "To him the mighty mother did unveil
> Her awful face";

of Milton

> "He passed the flaming bounds of time and space";

and of Dryden, Fancy

> "Scatters from her pictured urn
> Thoughts that breathe and words that burn".

The other dramatises the legend of the massacre of the Welsh bards by Edward the First and makes the bard before "plunging into the roaring tide" curse him and prophesy the Elizabethan era; its noble language and style have had even more influence than the former on later English poets, like Shelley (in Hellas), Keats (in his Odes), and Byron (in his Isles of Greece); it contains lines, that have grown familiar to all readers;

> "Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
> Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes,
> Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart".
> "Fair laughs the morn and soft the zephyr blows,
> Whilst, proudly riding o'er the azure realm,
> In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes,
> Youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm."

He was greatly delighted with Ossian; he studied the old Norse and Welsh literatures; and he paraphrased, in vigorous ballad and octosyllabic verse, some passages from their poetry, which he published in 1768. The pieces were The Fatal Sisters, The Descent of Odin, and The Triumphs of Owen; other posthumous paraphrases were The Death of Hoel, Caradoc, and Conon. They are instinct with the picturesque power of the primitive Teutonic and Celtic poetry, and they show that, if Gray had been born half a century later, he would have been the foremost representative of the new and more passionate poetry of the nineteenth century. The only other poem he wrote worth notice was his Ode for Music on the Installation of the Duke of Grafton as Chancellor of Cambridge University (1769). The minister had made him Professor of History the year before. It is but a feeble echo. His career was over; for ill-health had taken possession of him; and he died in 1771, aged 55.

## Section 19.

**1.** Another fastidious artist, who rose in revolt against the heroic couplet and prepared the way for the lyric outburst of a later time, was William Collins (1721-1759). He began, as a boy at school and college, to imitate the Queen Anne poets. His Persian Eclogues, or, as he afterwards called them, Oriental Eclogues, written at Winchester, and his Epistle to Sir Thomas Hanmer, written at Oxford, and published, the one in 1742 when he was 21, and the other in 1743, are in the heroic couplet. It was by these he was best known in his day. But there is in them some promise of his later odes and of the coming time. He breaks them up into irregular paragraphs and stanzas, with occasionally a refrain, as in the second and third eclogue; and there is in these two at least a lyrical passion that differs by a whole world from the satiric or didactic or rhetorical use of the verse by Pope. The first eclogue, Selim or The Shepherd's Moral, and the fourth, Agib and Secander or The Fugitives, are more like the frigid dramas of the time that modelled themselves on Addison's Cato. But Hassan or The Camel Driver, and Abra or The Georgian Sultana, are lit with

genuine emotion; they are both love lyrics, the one, however, giving prominence to the expression of thirst in the desert, and the other to the desire of a Sultan and Sultana for simple rustic life. His Epistle to Hanmer "on his edition of Shakespeare's works" shows an appreciative study of Shakespeare. In the midst of its Popian pseudo-classicism, there is evidence of a true insight into the dramatist's study of man.

**2.** He left Oxford in 1744, and settled down in London to a literary life, under the wing of Johnson. Here he wrote his Odes, which he published in 1747. Some of them are semi-pindaric, the Ode to Fear, the Ode to Mercy, and the Ode to Liberty. Others have the structure of the odes for St. Cecilia's day so popular in the age of Dryden and Pope —the well known Ode on the Passions intended for music, and the Ode on the Poetical Character. "The Manners, An Ode" and the much quoted "Ode written in the year 1746" beginning "How sleep the brave who sink to rest" again are merely poems in the octosyllabic couplet. The Odes To Pity, To Peace, To a Lady, take a six-lined stanza that would be octosyllabic but for the third and sixth lines, which rhyme and are of six syllables; the ode To Simplicity differs from these in using ten syllables in each of the third and sixth lines. They all echo in their phrases and rhythms Milton's youthful poems; but the echo has lost half its music in a prosaic and metaphysical atmosphere; the very themes, abstractions personified, reveal the age in which they were written. The Ode to Liberty has an opening strophe that has in it the nobler music of Gray; whilst the irregular stanzas of that on The Passions have finely coloured pictures of Hope, Revenge, Pity, Melancholy, and Cheerfulness that remind us of L'Allegro and Il Penseroso; thus of cheerfulness,

> "Her bow across her shoulders flung,
> Her buskins gemm'd with morning dew,
> Blew an inspiring air that dale and thicket rung".

But the metaphysical fallacy, the love of fossilised allegory, still mars the best of them. This cannot be said of his Ode to Evening, which comes nearest to the sweetness of Milton's early poems, and adopts a musical stanza of its own. Miltonic echoes abound;

"the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn";
"Many a nymph who wreathes her brow with sedge";
"thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet";
"Sallow autumn fills thy lap with leaves".

It comes nearest of all his poems to Gray's Elegy in suitability of theme and sentiment to the new audience. Two stanzas will show the insight into nature and love of simple life;—

"Or if chill, blustering winds, or driving rain,
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut,
That, from the mountain side,
Views wilds and swelling floods,"
"And hamlets brown and dim-discovered spires,
And hears that simple bell and marks o'er all
The dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil".

We feel no want of the usual rhyme here. In spirit and in freedom of treatment and of melody it anticipates the best of the nineteenth century.

3. As he developed, he grew, unlike Gray, more simple both in his metres and expression of emotion. In his dirge in Cymbeline beginning

"To fair Fidele's grassy tomb",

and in his Ode on the death of Thomson the poet, beginning

"In yonder grave a Druid lies
Where slowly winds the stealing wave",

both written in the same alternately rhyming four-lined stanza, and evidently composed in 1748, the personification of entities has been almost abandoned. He is getting nearer and nearer to the simplicity of emotion and art that marks the true elegy and ballad and lyric. And though in his last poem, his Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands (1749), he adopts an elaborate stanza and a majestic note, he shows that he was about to develop into a romantic poet such as Scott was half a century after. It has only one allegorised abstraction, Virtue, and the only mark of Queen Anne conventionalism in it is the frequent reference to the "Muse". It describes, in fourteen stanzas of seventeen lines each, the romance of Highland legend

and myth, their connection with the prehistoric past, and their likeness to those that Tasso introduced into his Jerusalem Delivered. He makes poetic reference to Shakespeare's Macbeth, and Ben Jonson's visit to Drummond of Hawthornden, and closes with a wish that he may one day see with his own eyes Scotland's "splendid friths and lakes", and her

> "Lowly glens o'er-hung with spreading broom,
> Or o'er her mountains creep in awful gloom".

Most striking is the stanza that pictures the shepherd's wife waiting the return of her husband and seeing in dream his wraith "drown'd by the kelpie's wrath". The solid material of the coming poetry abounds in the ode; it has more promise than all his other poetic work. And yet it is academic and not national. Like Gray, he has ever the consciousness of a small cultured circle around him. But, like him too, he has mingled with this a dim sense of a wider audience that has its love of poetry nearer to the fountains of all humanity. Hence their revolt against the monotony of the Dryden and Pope couplet. Like all insurgents, they ran to the opposite extreme, and took up with the intricacy of the Pindaric ode, with which previous poets had toyed. The Elegy and the Ode to Evening pointed in the true direction; but their genius was not strong enough to follow it before the old popular poetry and the new popular audience had come to the front. They distrusted their newer and better instincts, and, though their odes have much affected the more lyric measures of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, and Swinburne, they fell more and more into the background, as the passionate poetry of the Revolution, and the more natural poetry of thought came into vogue.

4. It was only towards the close of their careers that they allowed themselves to drink in the new romantic atmosphere. Gray in The Bard and his Paraphrases from the Norse and the Welsh, and Collins in his Ode on the Highlands showed how the currents of poetic feeling were changing. The narrow circles of culture were about to lose their power, with their French and pseudo-classical traditions and models. And the nation was about to turn

back to its primitive sources of national feeling and to mould the new poetry. We have no clearer evidence of this than in the number of attempts during the second half of the century to palm off on the public manufactured or dressed-up specimens of old poetry and the great success that attended them.

## Section 20.

1. The most striking instance of this was the publication of The Poems of Ossian by James Macpherson, a schoolmaster at Ruthven in Inverness. At twenty years of age he had published a poem called The Highlander in 1758. And in the following year he met John Home the author of the once popular drama Douglas and the friend of Collins who had addressed to him his Ode on Highland Superstitions. The meeting resulted in what he called translations of fragments of Gaelic poetry in 1760. The Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh paid his expenses on a tour of discovery through the Highlands. He professed to have been most successful, and published in 1762 Fingal, an Epic Poem in Six Books, and in 1763 Temora, an Epic Poem in Eight Books. He was as vague as the portraits of his heroes in his statements as to the originals. And though a fierce controversy arose at once as to the genuineness of the productions, the only original printed before Macpherson died in 1796 was that of the seventh book of Temora. When the Gaelic Ossian was published in 1807, it was imperfect, and, according to accomplished Gaelic scholars, utterly unlike true Gaelic poetry. It was in blank verse, a form said to be quite unknown to Irish or Gaelic poetry, and its diction has been criticised as modern and tinged with anglicisms and even classicisms. Macpherson was no Gaelic scholar, and evidently picked up the legends, that he wove into the poems, from Highland friends like Alexander Macdonald the poet, and afterwards had his version of them translated into Gaelic by them.

2. The version passed like an epidemic through Europe, and seems to have been responsible not only for the form of Napoleon's bulletins, but for the quasi-heroic attitude in

which he and his generals loved to pose. It awakened and gave shape to the war-spirit throughout the last quarter of the century; there were few of the military leaders but had studied this eighteenth century edition of old warlike legends of a primitive people. The sense of bardic fame ringing through the ages explains the attitudes and deeds of many of them and tinges their portraits both by painters and historians of the time. The book was translated into almost every European language; and its influence is apparent in Goethe's Werther, in Schiller's Robbers, and in all the Storm-and-Stress literature of Germany, in the productions and speeches of the French Revolutionists, in the romantic literary movement that preceded and followed the Revolution, and in much of the Italian, Spanish, and Danish poetry of the time. It greatly affected the prose style of eighteenth century romance, and was a direct antidote to Johnsonianism in the imaginative literature. In our own century it bent the genius of Scott to the Highlands, and moulded the dramas of Byron, and the often vague imagery of Shelley; it appears in the style of Kingsley's Hereward, and directly or indirectly it is responsible for the pioneering efforts of Walt Whitman in prose poetry and for the rapid growth of poetic prose through De Quincey, Bulwer Lytton, and Ruskin. During last century it stirred Blake to misty prophecies, led writers of romance back into the less known periods of the past, and gave the new audience a delight in mysterious and almost formless legend and tale and idea.

3. It was little wonder that Macpherson so prospered, and that so many attempted to follow in his footsteps; in 1780 Dr. Smith of Campbelltown published "Sean Dana", ancient poems "composed by Ossian, Orran, Ullin, and other bards"; in 1787 Harold, an Irishman, printed at Dusseldorf Ossianic poems in English; and in 1789 we have Brooke's Reliques of Gaelic Poetry. The final result was a full and genuine study of Celtic literature.

4. The book is as real a product of the eighteenth century literary spirit as Gray's or Collins's poems. "The Bard" takes a Welsh legend and puts it into would-be

Pindaric verse. Fingal takes a variety of Gaelic legends about a hero of the second or third century after Christ and weaves them into a would-be primitive Gaelic epic. Like Rousseau, they reveal the tendency to find a refuge from the artificiality and coils of modern society in an older age. Like him too, they look at that primitive time through the rose colour of their own century. Everything looms colossal or heroic or happy through the mist of ages. The eighteenth century did not reach the critical standpoint in history; it could not discriminate between the atmosphere of the past and the medium of sentiment and opinion through what seemed history. And it was out of this vague and confused view of the past that its romance and romantic movement grew; these were nothing if they were not historical or at least worshipful of the past especially the far past; they found their golden age in a time that had completely vanished.

5. There was of course a real basis for Macpherson's Ossian, as the more careful study of the old Irish literature and the recovery of relics of old Gaelic poetry and legend have shown. Most of his names both of personages and localities belong to the cycle of Celtic tales, though a number of them are somewhat Saxonised or Latinised by him, as, for example, Finn is changed to Fingal, the form he found in Barbour the old Scottish poet, and he mingles names from the myths of the gods with names from the heroic tales and from the semi-historic cycle. In the Book of Leinster there are many poems and tales which circle round the name of Finn, the son of Cumall, Oisin the bard his son, and Oscar his grandson, and two of the poems are ascribed to Oisin. The Scots came from Ireland and established the kingdom of Dalriada in Argyleshire and the South-west of Scotland; and for centuries there was the closest intercourse between it and Ireland; even as late as the fifteenth century the Irish bards wandered round the Highlands singing their songs and telling their tales. After that the Scottish dialect of Irish began to become a distinct language with poems and prose legends in it. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw it made subservient to Saxon rule and ideas. But the myths and tales must have

survived. These Macpherson gathered and probably modified by a knowledge of the Irish manuscripts. Hence his Ossian, so called from the supposition that Oisin, the son of Finn, had sung the stories or written them in verse. The idea of an epic, or of a drama, the form that some of the fragments, as, for example, Comala, take, was foreign to Celtic literature; old Irish imagination used either the lyric or the brief poetic narrative alternating with prose that belongs to the stage preliminary to epic. He took the idea from the Iliad, which he afterwards translated into prose. He also confused the different types and ages of Celtic poetry; he took, for example, Cuthullin from the mythological cycle, and Darthula (Deirdre) from the heroic, and placed them with Fingal and Ossian, who belong to the historic period, on the borders of Christianity; he also took Starno and Swaran from the Norse times, and brought them into conflict with these heroes of the third century, though the Scandinavian did not appear on the Highland coast for centuries after. But this confusion is common in oral tradition and legend.

6. There is however a true mark of the eighteenth century in the poems. Their material is stripped of all the supernatural elements that belong to the very essence of Celtic myth and legend; there is nothing of even the common features of Highland tale and legend, the soothsaying, the second sight, the talking ravens, the kelpies, that appear even in Collins's Ode. In the preliminary "Dissertation on the Æra of Ossian", this is acknowledged; "It is a singular case, it must be allowed, that there are no traces of religion in the poems ascribed to Ossian". "But gods are not necessary when the poet has genius". The Gaelic bards, it asserts, never mixed their religion and the deeds of their heroes. Moreover Druidism was exploded, and Christianity not yet established. "The extreme ignorance, on the part of Ossian, of the Christian tenets, shows that that religion had only lately been introduced". Blair in his Dissertation emphasises the point, as he also emphasises the high ideal of sentiment and morality; "no poet maintains a higher tone of virtuous and noble sentiment throughout all his works"; Fingal ever shows magnanimity, heroism,

generosity; so do all the other heroes; "valour reigns; but it is a generous valour, void of cruelty, animated by honour, not by hatred". "We behold no debasing passions among Fingal's warriors; no spirit of avarice or of insult; but a perpetual desire of being remembered for gallant actions; a love of justice; and a zealous attachment to their friends and their country". "We find tenderness and even delicacy of sentiment predominant over fierceness and barbarity". "The horrors of war are softened by intermixed scenes of love and friendship". Foldath in Temora "abhors all fraud and cruelty, is famous for his hospitality to strangers; open to every generous sentiment and to every soft and compassionate feeling". Many of the heroes are "amiable". "Ossian himself appears to have been endowed by nature with an exquisite sensibility of heart; prone to tender melancholy". "Covetousness and effeminacy are yet unknown". "His poetry deserves to be styled the poetry of the heart". Its "two characteristics are tenderness and sublimity". "It breathes nothing of the gay and cheerful kind". "No poet knew better how to seize and melt the heart". What is this but a description of the ideal humanity that through Rousseau was to brood over the French Revolution? Macpherson came at the turning of the tide between the cool intellectual deism and indifference to religion of the age of Pope and the fervour of evangelicalism that marked the time of Cowper. His age was religiously naked, and Scotland, especially through its universities including Aberdeen in which the young Highlander was trained, felt the influence of Voltaire and the French scepticism. It is really the neutral-tinted avoidance of all religious sentiment or idea that homes Ossian to the middle of the eighteenth century better than anything else. A lofty moral ideal untinged by religious ideas was what the French philosophers and their followers in England preached and professed to find in nature. "Noble sentiments", "sublime and tender passions", "a heart that glows", "a heart that is full and pours itself forth", magnanimity, humanity, generosity, mercy, pity, love prevail over all the tendencies of warriors; and they predominate in the romantic fiction and poetry of the end of the eighteenth century. "Sensibility" was the mark of every hero and heroine of the

romantic movement, as it is of Ossian. Sadness is ever falling upon the spirit of both the bard and his heroes and heroines; "the joy of grief is one of his commonplaces." Now the middle of last century is marked in English poetry by a vein of melancholy, if not pessimism, not merely in poems like Night Thoughts and The Grave, but in academic poets like Collins and Gray, satiric poets like Johnson, and popular poets like Goldsmith in spite of his cheerful disposition. Most of the Queen Anne poets are optimistic over the world as it is, most of the poets of the Revolution period are optimistic over the world as it is to be. The vale of tears lies between. And Ossian came in it. He and his warriors and women indulge in tears as much as Werther or the heroes and heroines of the romances. "I will remember them with tears", "The tear is on their cheek", "The young tear of the virgin will fall", "My crowding tears rushed down"; phrases like these come on every second page. Nay, we find the perfect hero Fingal and his son Fillan indulge in the same way on the eve of battle in Temora; the son wished to be leader of the array, "the tear hung in his eye"; the father saw this, and "he hid the big tear with his locks." The wailing poetry of the book consists in the sadness of memory, and in the sadness of outlook towards the grave and oblivion, two emotions that connect the middle of the eighteenth century and its literature with the perennial springs of human feeling.

7. The only tinge of the supernatural that appears in the book is also of this cosmopolitan type that marked the century. Ghosts of the same transparent material as haunted the ruined abbeys and castles of its romance, and frightened a number of even the most determined materialists of the time, abound in Ossian; they stream down "like the shadow of mist" upon battlefields or meditative warriors; "the stars dim-twinkle through" them; they weep and talk and sing and even fight and then "vanish like a mist that melts on the sunny hill." "I saw the ghost of night; his robe of mist flew on the wind, I could behold his tears". The only instance of a spirit approaching the divine is "the spirit of Loda" in "Carricthura"; he comes and fights with Fingal; but this is in a Scandinavian episode and he is

a foreign deity. Even this small leaven of the supernatural is shadowy and vague; all that is substantial in it belongs to the eighteenth century, the belief in ghosts that are in every respect like men except that they can be seen through and cannot be felt. Macpherson meant to appeal to the new audience as well as to the old, to all Europe as well as to England, and he took the right method.

8. To please the cultured he gave much attention to the epic manner of Homer. In his two epics, Fingal and Temora, epics of war, he followed, as Blair points out, the fundamental rules drawn by Aristotle from the Iliad; he made the "action one, complete and great, feigned and not merely historical, enlivened with characters and manners, and heightened by the marvellous". Many of the incidents resemble those in Homer. But it is in the similes that there is most resemblance. There is scarcely an episode without a dozen of them. The most frequent are the similes for two warriors or two armies about to come to grips; they are constantly compared to two torrents or two storms, or the gathering of clouds; next to these are the comparison of a warrior entering battle to a star or meteor, and that of a warrior falling to a tree cut down or smitten by a storm.

9. But he could not adopt the style of Homer, or even of Homer as translated by Pope. In his 1773 preface he gives a fragment of a Northern Tale, first in the peculiar chopped-up prose of Ossian, and then in the heroic couplet; the two sound like the products of two different worlds; the one striking in its primitive rhythm, the other commonplace in its smooth artificiality. Indeed Ossian was the chief symptom of the revolt against the Queen Anne verse, and could not appear in heroic rhymes. He turned to the Old Testament as given in the Authorised Version for his method of poetic expression. He gauged the new audience better than any poet of the time. Their ear, their imagination, their emotions, as well as their belief, had been trained in the splendid prose poetry of the Psalms, The Song of Solomon, The Book of Job, and the Prophets. Any chapter of Isaiah or Jeremiah will supply a dozen verses that have manifestly been the models of the style and imagery of Ossian; the staccato sublimity of The Psalms and the

amorous apostrophes of the Song of Solomon are still nearer; but they are secularised here. It is, however, the pessimism of Job that has dictated the spirit of the poem. Echoes of Biblical phrases and Biblical imagery are thickly studded over it; "His face is without form and dark"; "And the voice of the people is heard no more"; "silence is in the house of her fathers"; "Loveliness was around her as light"; "he comes in the roar of a thousand storms, and scatters battles from his eyes"; "She was covered with the light of beauty, but her heart was the house of pride"; "Heroes stand not in my presence; they fall to earth from my hand"; "Their eyes are flames of fire"; "Dwells he in the narrow house"; "My love is a son of the hill". Every page will supply a score of instances. What the eighteenth century was waiting for was a detheologised Old Testament, full of the spirit of war and chivalry, yet up to the level of modern christianised morality and feeling, rich with magnificent imagery, yet adapted to the modern love of nature, coloured by the romance of a far distant past, yet fitted to readers of prose, mystic in vague suggestion of sublimity like the inspired book of a religion, yet stripped of all creed. Blake was conscious of this yearning and so was Swedenborg. Ossian satisfied it. Hence its marvellous popularity in last century.

**10.** And how careful Macpherson was, in meeting the desires of the new audience, to avoid all anachronisms that could be easily detected, and all imagery that did not belong to the Highlands of Scotland. The only mistakes that the long and fierce controversy has been able to find are the use of the bow by the early Gaels, an instrument introduced long after the supposed time of Ossian, and the use of the car in a land that had no plains. He rejected the bag-pipes, the tartans, and the clans, which would have attracted a less astute artist. He avoided humour and definiteness of description; for these would at once have betrayed the age. He has a strongly metaphysical tendency through the whole book; yet never does he once give way to the personified abstractions of the poets of his time. He adhered to the vague and the general; and in order to give to it the air of the concrete that belongs to early and

especially to Celtic poetry he furnished himself with a host of names of personages and localities from the Celtic legends and threw one into every other sentence; in order to produce the picturesque effect of a primitive poem, he chopped up every sentence into a dozen or more and attached a simile or metaphor to each; and his comparisons he drew like a true poet from the nature he saw around him, the mountains and trailing clouds and mists, the torrents and storms, the forests and heaths, the showers of spring and the dews of night, the winters and brief days, the colours of the sunrise and sunset, the foam of the sea and the stillness of the lake, the stars and the moonlight. There is in the book a far truer insight into turbid and colossal nature than in any poet before Byron. There is genuine poetry scattered all over it, especially in some of the shorter poems like Cath-Loda, Carthon, The Songs of Selma, and The Death of Cuthullin, the poetry of a man who has been brought up amongst the mountains and has watched from boyhood the clouds catch and tear upon their heads, the mists wreath round them, and the moonlight play upon their torrents. Sentences and descriptions like these abound;—"Thou art with the years that are gone; thou fadest on my soul"; "If on the heath she moved, her breast was whiter than the down of Cana, if on the sea-beat shore, than the foam of the rolling ocean. Her eyes were two stars of light. Her face was heaven's bow in showers. Her dark hair flowed round it like the streaming clouds. Thou wert the dweller of souls, white-handed Strinadona!"; "Like a ridge of fire they descend the hill"; "Autumn is dark on the mountains; grey mist rests on the hills"; "Warriors fell by thy sword as the thistle by the staff of a boy"; "I knew her as she came through the dusky night along the murmur of Nora; she was like the new morn seen through the gathered mist"; "Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days?"; "Age is dark and unlovely; it is like the glimmering light of the morn when it shines through broken clouds and the mist is on the hills"; "We contended like gales of spring as they fly above the hill and bend by turns the feebly-whistling grass"; "When shall it be morn in the grave to bid the slumberer awake?"; "Thy words were the gale of the reeds"; "The music was like the

memory of joys that are past"; "There, mixed with the murmur of waters, rose the voice of aged men, who called the forms of night to aid them in the war"; "She came in all her beauty like the morn from the cloud in the east. Loveliness was around her as light. Her steps were like the music of songs. She saw the youth and loved him. He was the stolen sigh of her soul"; "I hear the call of the years. They say as they pass along, 'Why does Ossian sing? Soon shall he lie in the narrow house and no bard shall raise his fame'".

**11.** But, frequent as such passages are, few of them are not marred by the monotony and rhetoric of the age. The edifice, though Gothic and sublime in plan, is largely built of the stucco of the eighteenth century. Both heroes and heroines are constantly "rolling their eyes"; "she rolled her eyes upon the hero"; "he rolled awhile his silent eyes"; "wild rolled their eyes in rage"; rolling is a habit that everything falls into through the poem, the sea, the waves, the mist, the clouds, the thunder, the people, the years; but it is perfectly epidemic amongst the eyes of the personages. So the harp is always "the shell"; "the song of Lulan of shells"; "the sounding shell"; "the feast of shells"; "the king of shells". The wind is ever whistling through beards; "his grey beard whistled in the blast". A favourite epithet is "dark-brown"; even the years are dark-brown. Most of the heroines are "white-bosomed", most of the ships "dark-bosomed", most of the warriors "blue-shielded" or "car-borne". The epithets are repeated till they become wearisome. And this, combined with the perpetual apostrophe, and the minced-up sentences, makes it impossible to read the book continuously.

**12.** But this did not mar its popularity; the eighteenth century was not conscious of these faults. The controversialists failed to notice them or to see how closely the ideals and sentiments and the morality fitted the best of the new audience, how Biblical were the style and phraseology, how free from the coarseness of a rude age every reference to love, how like its treatment to the sentimental romances, how like the spiritual atmosphere to that of the culture of the time. It was both a symptom and a cause of the romantic

movement. Without it the storm-and-stress young poets and orators and warriors, the tearful and sentimental young women would have been without a conventional language. Product though it was for the most part of the eighteenth century, a fresh breeze from the primitive ages of the Celt blew through it upon European literature and art. And since its time it is the neglected races of Europe that have been giving the newest impulses to Western poetry, fiction and oratory, music and painting, the Celt, the Norseman, the Slave, and the Jew.

## Section 21.

**1.** The Reverend Thomas Percy, rector of a quiet parish in Northamptonshire, had been feeling the same impulse of the new audience towards the primitive forms and sources of literature. He had turned to the Saxon past that floated around him, to the ballads that he heard the peasantry still recite. He had been collecting them for many years when Ossian appeared; yet his time had drawn him into publishing a Chinese novel from the Portuguese and Miscellaneous Pieces relating to the Chinese. He at once published Five Pieces of Runic Poetry translated from Icelandic (1763); and began to prepare for the publication of his ballad collection. It appeared in February 1765, under the name of Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, in three volumes. It immediately became popular and went through four editions before the end of the century, whilst it stirred men like Ritson and Pinkerton and Herd to make similar collections. Like Macpherson, he prospered on the fame of his book, in spite of the controversy it roused. He became chaplain to the Earl of Northumberland, and though a grocer's son from Shropshire, made himself out to belong to the Earl's house; became dean of Carlisle in 1778, and Bishop of Dromore in 1782; he died at the age of 82 in 1811.

**2.** His famous book he professed to have based on a folio manuscript of ballads he had found "lying dirty on the floor" of a Shropshire friend, "being used by the maids to light the fire". But he had been gathering ballads himsel

for years ; and of the 176 in the first edition only 45 came from the manuscript, although it had 195 pieces. That he had not been the first to collect is shown by the mere fact that he had such manuscripts to draw from. This was dated 1650. Another that he took largely from was Pepys's collection at Cambridge, not yet published as a whole ; it had been begun by John Selden and continued by Samuel Pepys till 1700. He also consulted and collated from Anthony Wood's collection of 200 in the Ashmolean library at Oxford, a collection of political poems in the archives of the London Antiquarian Society, and a folio volume of printed ballads in the British Museum. He also drew upon private collections, especially a "large folio volume which was lent by a lady"; and he had Scotch ballads from several correspondents in Edinburgh. Nay, there had already been some little demand for ballads by the readers of books and journals. For D'Urfey included a few in his Pills to Purge Melancholy (1719-20), and Allan Ramsay made them a feature in his Evergreen (1724), and Tea-table Miscellany (1724-27); and A Collection of Old Ballads in three volumes was published in London between 1723 and 1725. But the time had evidently not arrived for their full influence upon English literature. It was not till about the middle of the century that the new middle class began to mould and direct literary ambitions. And the small circle of London critics to whom Swift and Pope addressed themselves felt ballads to be beneath their notice. There is one exception. Addison in his Spectator papers becomes almost enthusiastic about Chevy Chase, and mentions The Two Children in the Wood as "one of the darling songs of the common people". But he was beginning to cater for the coming audience as well as for the coffee-houses, and there is a certain condescension in his references. And this cultured condescension was still manifest in the first reception of the Reliques by the culture of London ; Warburton in a letter to Bishop Hurd speaks of the book with scorn ; and Johnson parodied the ballad style in his couplet ;—

> "I put my hat upon my head, and went into the Strand,
> And there I saw another man with his hat in his hand".

But the public that now bought books had far outgrown the

dictation of London critics, and the collection was widely read, and had a lasting effect upon English literature.

3. Yet over much of the marble of the old popular poetry the stucco of the eighteenth century was plastered. Percy was so far influenced by his narrower audience as to prune what he thought the vulgarities of many of the ballads, to re-edit the conclusion of others so as to fit the sentiment of the day, and to eke out a few more. The custom of printing the popular poetry in broad sheets for sale, that arose in the seventeenth century, had already done much to vulgarise its most imaginative qualities. Oral transmission amongst the peasantry seems rather to have refined their gold. For the Scotch ballads, taken down from the recital of some shepherd or rustic by Scott and other Scottish collectors, have the true poetic fire in them. Whilst most of the English ballads, especially those of the South of England, taken as they were from black-letter prints, are feeble and often prosaic. The rough-voiced and rough-moralled hawkers from the city, like Autolycus in The Winter's Tale, could not but debase their currency to suit their own feelings and ideas of poetry. Even most of those that Shakespeare wove into his dramas had been by his time stripped of much of their real poetry, although his own familiarity with them, and his assumption that his audience was familiar with them show how close the frequenters of the Elizabethan theatre were to the people and to the springs of national life. Even the scholar and courtier, Sir Philip Sydney, acknowledged that "the old song of Percy and Douglas" moved his heart "more than with a trumpet", even though "sung by some blind crowder"; and the devotee of classical precedent, Ben Jonson, would have rather been the author of it than of all his works; the life-blood of the nation ran through the veins of even the most hide-bound pedant. The recovery of these children of the wild and forest and wayside for English literature was the natural precursor of another great national era. Yet the eighteenth century could not help intruding its standard of taste. Percy acknowledges as much in his preface; "by a few slight corrections and additions a most beautiful or interesting sense hath started forth"; his "object was to

please both the judicious antiquary and the reader of taste; and he hath endeavoured to gratify both without offending either"; and he pleads guilty to the charge of concealing his own share in the amendments under some such general title as "Modern Copy". In spite of Ritson's crusade against him for vandalism, it was scarcely known how much he had "amended" the ballads till Hales and Furnivall reprinted (in 1867-8) the folio manuscript from which he took so many. The Second Book of the First Series, containing some eighteen ballads, poems, and songs, "that illustrate Shakespeare", supplies a salient example of his more obtrusive method of "correction and addition". The Friar of Orders Gray is the greater part of it Percy's own on a frame-work of scraps taken from various plays of the Elizabethan dramatist. The first two lines

> "It was the friar of orders gray
> Walked forth to tell his beads",

are modified from a scrap of Petruchio's introduced when he is taming his shrew,

> "It was the friar of orders gray
> As he walked forth on his way."

The third and fifth come without much alteration from the mad carollings of Ophelia; the fifteenth turns her most pathetic verse into one most prosaic;—

> "And will he not come again!
> No, no he is dead;
> Go to thy deathbed;
> He never will come again".

Percy's is;—

> "And will he ne'er come again?
> Will he ne'er come again?
> Ah! no he is dead and laid in his grave,
> For ever to remain".

The seventeenth beginning,

> "Sigh no more, lady, sigh no more",

is the first stanza of Balthazar's song in Much Ado About Nothing. The other twenty-two verses eke out these, on the model of Goldsmith's Edwin and Angelina in The Vicar of Wakefield, into an eighteenth century story of romantic love, with an occasional phrase from Shakespeare's repertory of ballads, like "since summer trees were leavy," and "flaxen locks". The friar turns out to be the youth whom

the lady had rejected and believed in her despair to be dead. Percy revised, according to eighteenth century ideas, no less than twenty-nine, including The Heir of Lynne, Barbara Allen's Cruelty, Sweet William's Ghost, Edom o' Gordon, Gilderoy, King Estmere, Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne, Sir Cauline, Aldingar, and The Child of Elle. The last, for example, he found with thirty-nine lines, he left it with fifty verses of four lines each.

4. But on the whole English literature has to thank him for meddling so little, when he had such a pretty turn for song and ballad as he displays in his "O, Nancy wilt thou go with me", and his "Hermit of Warkworth". Perhaps, if he had left them "defective or corrupted", as he found them, they would not have so readily appealed to the literary instinct of the time. We can see from Ossian how much the pioneers of the older literatures had to bewig and powder them for the audiences of the third quarter of the century, lest they should be rejected as mere "anti-quarianism", a word Warburton applied to this collection even as it was. Percy himself was afraid, he says in his preface, that they were of too great "simplicity", and was "long in doubt whether in the present state of improved literature, they would be deemed worthy the attention of the public." And "to atone for the rudeness of the more obsolete poems, each poem concludes with a few modern attempts in the same kind of poetry writing; and to take off from the tediousness of the long narratives they are every-where intermingled with little elegant pieces of the lyric kind"; "the artless productions are" "occasionally confronted with specimens of the compositions of con-temporary poets of a higher class". Yet his better instincts tell him that the former are often the better.

5. In other words the collection is by no means one of old ballads alone. It is perhaps even more an anthology of narrative, satiric, didactic, and lyrical poems from the two previous centuries, a large number of them with the names of the authors attached. For instance, we have Marlowe's Passionate Shepherd to his Love, Wotton's philosophical lyric "My Mind to me a Kingdom is", Drayton's Dowsabell, a Sonnet by Queen Elizabeth, a song from a masque of

Shirley, the seventeenth century dramatist, a passage from Warner's Albion's England, Lovelace's To Althea from Prison, Verses written by Charles the First in Carisbrook Castle, A Mad Song from Tom D'Urfey, another by Henry Carey, author of "Sally in our Alley", Raleigh's The Lie, Wither's Shall I wasting in despair, and a score of others well known to readers or singers long before Percy's time. And the absurdity of the common idea, that the Reliques consisted wholly of the poetry of the people, grows more patent when we see cavaliers, noblemen, and even monarchs included in the list of authors.

6. Of the true metal there are not more than thirty or forty. A few of these are evidently from some version of the fourteenth or fifteenth century. The Ancient Ballad of Chevy Chase, The Battle of Otterbourne, and Sir Cauline are too full of obsolete words and phrases to come from any later time. Of the first he also gives a form that has marks of the seventeenth century upon it, the form that Addison refers to. Child's variorum edition of the ballads (about to be finished) shows as we should expect how numerous and varied the versions of each ballad, some fresh from the olden time, others marred by the prosaic spirit of the ballad-hawkers. A large number of them bear the marks of having been composed, or at least entirely recomposed, in feudal or chivalric times. The Arthurian ballads, of course, belong to this class, The Boy and the Mantle, The Marriage of Sir Gawaine, Sir Lancelot du Lak, King Ryence's Challenge. But these are by no means of the best. Others make into romance or doggerel historical incidents, or incidents concerning historical personages, and these are of course not ancient. Fair Rosamond, Jane Shore, King Edward the Fourth and the Tanner of Tamworth, Sir Andrew Barton, Lady Anne Bothwell's Lament, The Bonny Earl of Murray, Mary Ambree, The Brave Lord Willoughby, and Chevy Chase are of this class. Another set, like Gilderoy, the Scotch Robin Hood of the seventeenth century, and George Barnwell, are tales of modern crime and love. A few take themes from the times of the Crusades, like "As ye came from the Holy Land". Some are marred by the controversial spirit of the Reformation, as A Ballad

of Luther, and Little John Nobody. Others are spoiled by abstractions and allegory like The Tower of Doctrine, The Complaint of Conscience, and Plain Truth and Plain Ignorance. Some are burlesques, as The Tournament of Tottenham, The Sale of Rebellious Household Stuff, The Dragon of Wantley, and St. George for England. These three latter classes are not properly ballads, having nothing of romance in them. Another class deal with Gothicised stories from classical literature, Ulysses and the Siren, Constant Penelope, and Queen Dido. A second set of the same type deal with native legend, like St. George and the Dragon, and Legend of Sir Guy. A third versify legends that belong to all Europe, like The Wandering Jew, and King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid.

7. Of course all the ballads have some bases or features that resemble the ballads of other European and especially Aryan nations. Whether these common elements reveal their community of origin, or only the likeness of the climate and nature and circumstances out of which they grew, is a question that is practically insoluble. Those that have their complete story in common with others have their community from migration of legend. As for those that have only a general likeness, there is so much that seems almost automatic in the romance and reflections of human beings that a common stage of development is more often the true solution of the resemblance.

8. In Percy's collection there are few that are connected with the oldest folk-magic, the fairies. "Robin Goodfellow", and "The Fairy Queen" are evidently poems from his own time. Ballads there are none like Tamlane, or Thomas of Ercildoune, that narrate stories of the intercourse of fairies and human beings. The only supernatural elements that we have in the true ballads of the collection are the use of magical robes or weapons, as in The Boy and the Mantle, and King Estmere, and the introduction of a ghost as in Sweet William's Ghost, and Margaret's Ghost. But these are rarer than in the Scottish ballads recovered by later collectors.

9. The three great passions of the true ballads are love, war, and adventure, especially adventure in hunting. They

are the primitive and elemental passions. They form the atmosphere of Ossian too. And it was the very primitiveness and simplicity of their exhibition that drew the latter half of the eighteenth century to them. A literature and a civilisation that have become too refined, subtle, and artificial, must decay of exhaustion, unless they recruit themselves at the primal fountains of racial power. Hence the collection in last century all over Europe, not in England alone, of those true products of primitive literary instinct, the ballads. Another reason was that at this time the people in the West were about to enter again into literature and drive out of it the evil spirit of courts and narrow circles; they brought their tales with them. Covered though so many of these ballads in Percy's collection were with eighteenth century stucco, it was little wonder that they became so popular; the new writers felt, as they read or copied them, that they were drinking at the pure fountains of literature.

**10.** The most picturesque, vigorous, and stirring of the ballads dealt with war and adventure. And England in our era was almost more than in any age devoted to those pursuits. Englishmen were spreading through all countries of the world and bringing back the romances of their travels; and English arms were busy in every quarter of the globe losing or expanding the empire. Never were the ferocity, the courage, the love of revenge, the passion for slaughter and conquest, that characterise so many of the ballads, more appreciated than now. Border strife, the struggles of chivalry, and the long conflict between the Saracens and the West, had been very fertile themes for the ballad faculty. Chevy Chase, Sir Cauline, and King Estmere were instances of each in the Reliques. Unfortunately it has been found that these and The Child of Elle have been most tampered with; the latter three were only fragments in the folio manuscript; the forty-six stanzas of Sir Cauline in it, for example, were expanded into ninety-two by Percy, and the whole was planed and rounded to make an eighteenth century version of a tale of chivalry. Percy manages the task with great art and a knowledge of ballad language gained by constant reading of

the ballads. An analysis of the additions and changes will throw light on the tastes of the new audience. In the folio manuscript it is less of a unity and more affiliated to the supernatural; the turns in events and emotions are more abrupt and less romantic; and the lady has fewer feelings than in the sentimental revision. Sir Cauline loves the daughter of his king, and falls ill from the passion. The monarch sends the very cause of the illness, who, "is a leech full fine", to attend to him. He confesses his love. And in stanzas that are lost she evidently pleads that she cannot marry him. But she sends him to meet "the eldridge king" on Eldridge Hill, thinking that this finally disposes of him; for

> "Never man bare his life away,
> Since the day that I was borne".

He goes at midnight, and meets the furious king, fights with him, and cuts his hands off. The lady that led the eldridge king's horse pleads for him, and gets his life from the knight, who goes off with the eldridge sword and rings, and presents them to the king's daughter. There is a hiatus in the poem; it opens again with the appearance of a giant "unmackley made", who bears five heads "upon his squier", drinks the king's wine, "puts the cup in his sleeve", and says he will have the king's daughter, and burn his temples unless a "pear" is found to meet him. The king offers "broad lands", and his daughter to wife to anyone who will be the champion. Sir Cauline stands forth and offers; he arms himself with his "eldridge sword", and the "hend soldan" and he fight "a summer's day", till at last the terrible enemy is slain. The knight demands the daughter to wife, and his demand is granted. But a "false steward" sets a lion on him when he is weaponless; he takes his "mantle of green", and stuffs it into the mouth of the wild beast, "till the lion's heart did burst".

> "Then he did marry the king's daughter
> With gold and silver bright,
> And fifteen sons this lady bore
> To Sir Cauline the knight".

That is the original. Percy adopts the picturesque style that was coming into fashion in the poetry of his day with the growth of the art of painting; slight details are made into

pictures, and he fixes other details with the true ballad instinct; he places the king "in Ireland", and calls his daughter "Christabelle"; and she becomes in his hands, instead of the listless if not cruel leech, who disposes of the awkward lover, a sympathetic, sentimental heroine of the eighteenth century, especially towards the close. So the "eldridge king's" lady appeals to him

> "For the maiden's love that most you love"

to spare her lord; and he spares him on condition that "the paynim" becomes a Christian. This makes the elfin less supernatural, and identifies him more with the Saracens than the original. The king's daughter receives her knight with passionate welcome,

> "Blushes scarlet red,
> And fetches a gentle sigh";

and he kisses "her lily-white hand" and "the tears starte from his ee'". She could not marry him, but she would marry no other man; and they pass "many a pleasant hour", "in love and sweet dalliance", in "a fair arbour". There the king finds them, "and an angry man was he"; he banishes Sir Cauline never to return on pain of death; and imprisons "Fair Christabelle" in a tower, where she "droopeth in her mind", and doth "lament and weep", refusing every suitor, king, duke, or lord. To cheer her, her father proclaims a tournament; and at it, a stranger knight is ever victor, till a giant appears to avenge an affront done him by a knight; he will burn the halls and towers, and take the king's daughter, and cut off the king's head or fight with "a peer". The king makes the offer of his daughter's hand to anyone who will champion him. She is woebegone, "casts her thought on her own true love", and, like the heroine of last century romance, weeps. The stranger knight offers;

> "The lady sighed a gentle sigh
> 'That this were my true knight'";

and through six stanzas of the combat, she "deeply sighs", and "weeps for woe", and "shrieks loud shriekings three", weeps again, and at the success of the knight,

> "thanks Christ,
> That had rescued her from thrall".

He falls "into a swound", and the king again sends his daughter "a leech of skill". She raises his beaver;

> "'It is my life, my lord', she says"

and

> "Shrieked and swound away".

He just opens his eyes, gives her a parting look, then closes them in death; she

> "Lays her pale cold cheek to his",

recites a stanza over him, and

> "Burst her gentle heart in twain,
> Fair Christabelle did die".

**II.** The contrast between the almost harsh directness of the original ballad and this sentimental version brings out more clearly than anything else could the genesis and character of the romances of our period. Percy would never have changed the happy ending into a tragedy, would never have introduced such tempests of sighs and floods of tears, so much of the sentimental amorous element, had he not felt within his own breast the stirrings of the new forms of the passion that were to dominate literature, had he not been in sympathy with the new audience. The same impulse led him and the writer of Ossian to such indulgence in tears. Rousseau and Sterne, from two totally different points of view and planes of feeling, had similar impulses and similar results. It was the age of "sensibility"; we feel it to be a literary motive as late as Jane Austen's Sense and Sensibility in which one of her heroines, Marianne, is always on the brink of tears. It was the inclusion of women in the new audience that produced the phenomenon; perhaps the habit of tears and sighs had its main sources in the liberation of so many women from household drudgery by the wealth of the new industrial age, in the amount of idle time they had before new philanthrophic or artistic or professional employment was allowed them, and in the consequent weakness of nerves. The ladies of the old ballads are far more manly, so to speak, than those of Percy's versions; they may "drop the tear from the ee", or cry "waly, waly", but it is only for a moment, and for some tragedy that has swept through their lives. One of the truest marks of the old ballads is the brevity and almost

prosaic directness of the sentiment or reflection, if they ever indulge in it. Ferocity mingles even with their pathos, as in the most beautiful of all the ballads, Helen of Kirkconnell. Percy had to tone this down for his audience, and he had to purify their tales of "fause love", so as to escape the unprurient and unprudish directness of their references, that would have sounded gross to the new audience. They delight, and without self-consciousness or shame, in all those primitive passions that Christianity condemned, revenge, cruelty, hatred, superstitious fear, passionate love that never hesitates. It is only their sense of kinship and of property, and their monogamous customs, that make their romance. Their fundamental emotions and manners are pre-christian, though they may be often veneered over with Christian phrases and references. Without the eighteenth century dress that Percy gave them, they could never have appealed so deeply as they did to the heart of his time. And they retained enough of their primitive beauty, and almost savage simplicity, to make readers feel that they were going back into a state of nature, such as Rousseau painted and recommended. They also retained enough from the strata of chivalry through which so many of them had passed to satisfy the new desire for chivalric romance; in most of them there are knights and fair ladies. Whilst their popular origin, apparent in them all, could not well be effaced, and appealed to the revolutionism of the time; sympathy with rebels against social custom and law runs through the whole of the Robin Hood ballads, some forty in number, and many of the Border ballads, like Adam Bell Clym of the Clough and William of Cloudesley; and the century that saw so many punished for breaches of the harsh game laws, so many riots, the French Revolution, and the rise of the people, was certain to drink in their spirit; even the ballads of pure chivalry are from the popular point of view; they are generally tales of unequal love, love of a knight for a king's daughter, or for a peasant girl; and if they tell of falsehood and malice and slander, it is the little page, the representative of the people, that reveals it, and comes off the hero, as in Aldingar, and Old Robin of Portingale; there are a few exceptions, like Glasgerion, where the page does the wrong. Many, of

course, there are, that might have come from any class, ballads expressive of a tragic breach of some great natural, or national, or religious law, or of some tragic incident that appeals to every human heart, Edom o'Gordon with its wild story of revenge, Edward Edward the wail and curse of a parricide, Sir Patrick Spence the elegy over brave sailors and drowned courtiers. The Jew's Daughter a common story of the slaughter of a Christian child, and Gil Morrice the pathetic story of a son slain by his father, have necessarily no democratic tinge in them. But by far the most popular in last century were the love stories, The Nutbrown Maid, The Beggar's Daughter of Bethnal Green, Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard, Lord Thomas and Fair Annet, Fair Margaret and Sweet William, Barbara Allen's Cruelty, and The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington. This collection of ballads ushered in the great age of the romance of love, often in poetry, but still oftener in prose fiction. Other collections followed, especially in the North, and revealed the riches of this kind of literature, Herd's Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, Heroic Ballads &c. (1769), Pinkerton's Select Scottish Ballads (1783), Johnson's Scots Musical Museum (1787-1803), Ritson's Ancient Songs and Ballads (1792) and Robin Hood (1795), Scott's Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border (1802-3), Jamieson's Popular Ballads and Songs (1806), Sharpe's Ballad Book (1824), Maidment's North Country Garland (1824), Kinloch's Ancient Scottish Ballads (1827), Motherwell's Minstrelsy (1827), and Buchan's Ancient Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland.

**12.** What gradually became apparent as this collection and publication of ballads proceeded was that the best of them belonged to the North of England and the Lowlands of Scotland, and that, if two versions existed, by far the most poetical and most pathetic was to be found in these two districts; the farther from the Border the worse the ballad, and where the same incident or feature was used, it was the Scotch ballad that made the most poetic use of it. For instance, a common ending for a ballad love romance is the burying of the unfortunate lovers in the same grave and the growth of trees out of their grave. This is how it put in Fair Margaret and Sweet William;—

"Margaret was buried in the lower chancel
And William in the higher;
Out of her breast there sprang a rose,
And out of his a briar.
They grew till they grew unto the church top
And then they could grow no higher;
And there they tied in a true lover's knot,
Which made all the people admire.
Then came the clerk of the parish,
As you the truth shall hear,
And by misfortune cut them down
Or they had now been there."

In Lord Thomas and Fair Annet, a Scotch version of the same story, it is put thus;—

"Lord Thomas was buried without the kirk wa',
Fair Annet within the quier;
And o' the tane there grew a birk,
The other a bonny brier.
And ay they grew, and ay they threw,
As they wad fain be near;
And by this ye may ken right weel
They were twa luvers dear."

This is no mere exception. The Scotch versions seldom fall into bathos, and the English avoid it as their origin approaches the Borders. The mingling of Celt, Saxon, and Scandinavian in the district between the Humber and the Forth, and the striking, though by no means overpowering, aspects of nature throughout it must have had much to do with this peculiar poetic faculty, the power of lyrical narrative. And it was out of this district that the renaissance of English literature came. It had remained dumb for centuries, but for these natural utterances of the tragedy that was in it; but as soon as peaceful conditions released the talent and energy that had so long been absorbed in border forays, the South of Scotland and the North of England rose again into the place they had occupied in literature during the seventh and eighth centuries, when they had formed one prosperous kingdom. It was the Lake School, not Chatterton or Blake or Cowper, that recreated poetry by the close of last century. And it was Burns and Scott that drew English lyric and narrative poetry and romantic fiction back to their natural fountains of inspiration. There is needed no proof that the old ballads deeply affected the genius of the last two. But we

are apt to forget that it was as balladists that Wordsworth and Coleridge began their poetical career; their Lyrical Ballads had appeared before the century was out. And the simplicity of the old folk-poems impelled them to a crusade against the conventional language and ornament that had stifled English poetry since the days of Milton. Wordsworth thought the Reliques the true redemption of English poetry, and in his famous Essay on Poetry said; "I do not think that there is an able writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligation to the Reliques; I know that it is so with my friends; and for myself I am happy in this occasion to make a public avowal of my own." He pointed out that German poetry had by the close of last century been greatly influenced by translations of the book, Burger and Goethe and Schiller imitating the ballads. But after Wordsworth wrote this came Scott with his marvellous expansions of ballad romances into his novels, Byron with his narrative poetry, and Browning, Tennyson, Rossetti, Swinburne, and a hundred other poets, trained in the school of ballads, and eager to shine as balladists.

## Section 22.

1. But out of the very region and atmosphere of the ballads came Burns, who had sung and died before Wordsworth expounded his poetical creed. Afterwards the English poet acknowledged the great beauty of the Scotch ballads and songs, as how could he not, with his Northumbrian birth and nurture? But in his Essay he passed the Scotch lyrist by, satisfied with classifying him beside Thomson. He had not seen that the Lowlands was to be, with his own Lake country, the native land of poetry for a time. In the Lowlands indeed had been flourishing for centuries a lyric power unsurpassed by any region of the world. It had been civilised, and yet war-like and courageous, when the Romans came north; it was the first section of Britain under the Saxons to become literary. It was for ages the scene of all the struggles between race and race, religion and religion, kingdom and kingdom, party and party. And yet it was a land fitted for agriculture and the pursuits of peace. It

had scenery that was beautiful and often striking, and that yet did not, like the Highlands, forbid close intercourse or union ; the inhabitants of one district were not shut off by high and bleak mountains from those of another. Nature was impressive and yet not overpowering. The mingling of races, too, gave a singular variety to the character of the people and to their imagination—the power of figurative and emotional expression that belongs to the Celt, the adventurous fancy of the Scandinavian, and the more calculating intellectual faculty of the Saxon. Hence the contradictory attributes assigned to the Scotch by different critics, the "perfervidum ingenium" and the "cannieness", the humour and the impermeability to a joke, the religiosity and the scepticism, the emotionalism and the metaphysical subtlety, the rough candour and the "pawkieness", the reckless dash and the strenuous persistence essential for worldly success, the revolutionism and the conservative caution, the large generosity and the miserly watchfulness over the pence. These contradictories are to be found in every Lowland village, and are due to the intermixture of such different racial types.

2. The northern dialect of Anglo-Saxon used in the region was sufficiently isolated to preserve it from the foreign influences that changed the southern dialects and to give it a more distinctive character, yet not sufficiently to raise it into a national language. It had the strong sense of nationality in it during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and boasted a vigorous literature. The accession of the Stuart dynasty to the English throne drew off the best secular talent of the district into England during the seventeenth century, whilst its religious wars and persecutions absorbed its earnest elements. The Union in the beginning of the eighteenth century at first tended to attract its literary ability to London. But the rise of a vigorous intellectual and national life in Scotland checked this emigration in the latter half of the century. The cessation of border strife, the truce in the Highlands, and the outlet abroad for Scottish enterprise began to give great prosperity to the people ; and the long-suppressed imagination and literary talent blossomed and fruited with vigour. French freedom of thought and revolutionism

leavened the capital and the universities, and through them the church and the country districts. The new audience of literature was ready in the Lowlands of Scotland long before it was getting under way in England. The educational system established by Knox had made reading and writing a prime necessity of life; to be illiterate was deemed even amongst the poorest a disgrace greater than outlawry or vagabondage. The appreciation of literature had become an instinct amongst the peasantry; and, as soon as the Union of the two kingdoms, and the final defeat of the Stuart cause in the rebellion of 1745 left them free from the harassment of civil strife and the fear of political or religious persecution, their talents addressed themselves to literature. They were taught in their schools to look upon English as the proper medium of prose and of more sustained poetic efforts like the epic or didactic poem or the drama. But the long centuries of oral transmission and of song had attached the Lowland dialect to the briefer poetic forms, the lyric and the ballad. It was these that were dear to every Scotch household and social gathering. Allan Ramsay, it is true, attempted a dramatic pastoral in Scotch; but it was largely a collection of lyrics.

3. One of the first tasks of the new dialect poets was to fit the old songs and ballads to the new national audience. Since they had been composed, puritanism had made Christianity a more emotional and practical religion amongst the Scotch; it had swept the minds of the Scotch peasantry, as it did the minds of the English middle class, of the old tendency to grossness of imagination or expression. The old minstrelsy had little regard for nice ears. And one of the chief duties of the new poetry was to purify the old songs and ballads. The advancing purification of literature of the early part of our own century has made some of the expressions of Ramsay and Burns seem broad, if not gross. Yet their main function was to revise the older poetry and fit it for the newer audience. There is little of the literature of last century but is as plain-spoken at times as their poems and songs.

4. Burns had the misfortune to come in the battle-time of two ages. The last quarter of the century showed the

collision of the old ideas and the new in every sphere, religion, social life, politics, philosophy, poetry; it was the meeting of the waters of tradition and revolution; and it was difficult for even the coolest head to know which way justice and purity pointed. It was little wonder that this Scottish peasant, "following the plough along the mountain-side", did not always show an unerring instinct in taste, morality, or life. The Celt, the Saxon, and the Scandinavian were at war within his breast. Without him warred powers and principalities, philosophies and creeds. Now he was stirred by the Jacobite traditions of his father's house, again by the Covenanting ardour of his mother's forefathers; now by the sober blood of his father's didacticism, again by the lyric fire of his mother's songs and ballads; now by the pure ideals of a cottar's Saturday night, again by the wild bacchanalian customs of the social life of his time. In politics he showed the same oscillation; he was a revolutionist one day, a patriot the next. In morality he vacillated between the puritan and the riotous debauchee of the eighteenth century. In principles he had no rest, now a Voltairian, or materialist, again a champion of the idea of God and the immortality of the soul. In religion he fluctuated between the attitude of the silent reverent worshipper and that of the scoffer. There is no fixed creed of any kind to be made out of his writings. He was "buffeted about by every wind of doctrine." And so was his time. There was no firm standing-ground to be found, no definite path of action, till the smoke of battle cleared after the century closed.

5. His works, like his life, consist of magnificent fragments, that can by no art be pieced together into a unity. And in this way are they the truest mirror of the age that produced them. His mind, like that of most of his fellow-countrymen, was open to all the tempestuous influences of the time. And his genius, his nation's perhaps more than his own, raised its products into European significance. They show "the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." Into his mould of concentrated passion ran the molten material of a revolutionary period. Howsoever he chose local theme and local form,

the result had absorbed the primal elements of human thought and passion that belonged to the age. And these it was that raised it, fragmentary and scattered though it was, to the level of world-wide poetry.

6. He was essentially a lyrist, capable of only one violent or colossal passion at a time, and he belonged to a great lyrical period of his country's literature. Read though he did and admire Addison and Pope, Thomson and Shenstone and Gray, Shakespeare and Milton, Richardson and Smollett, Ossian and Sterne, these could not bend him, except for a passing moment, from his true career. He meditated an epic and a tragedy; he wrote letters modelled on a Collection of Letters by the wits of the Queen Anne period which he came across when a boy; he indulged at times in Ossianesque attitudes and expressions. But he fell back in his natural moods on Scotch song. His true inspirers were Allan Ramsay's Works, A Select Collection of English Songs, called The Lark, which fell in his way when he was seventeen, and Robert Fergusson's Poems, which began to stimulate him to poetic production at twenty-three. Even in his satiric, descriptive, and allegorical poems he could not get clear of the lyrical mould; it was a song that was ever guiding his ear; and it was a lyrical stanza or rhythm that he adopted.

7. Howsoever precedent and great example might have imposed their fetters and moulds upon the poetry of the Revolution, it was an age essentially lyrical, as all volcanic ages are. And Scotland was the first to feel this. Long before the sense of revolutionism had grown strong in the century, all classes in that country had been inspired to lyrical outburst. It was partly due to the Jacobite risings, which stirred the upper ranks of Scotchmen in the Lowlands, and even the middle classes in the North East, to passionate expectation, and afterwards to passionate regret; we have William Hamilton of Bangour with his pathetic Braes of Yarrow, Rev. John Skinner with his Tullochgorum, George Halket the schoolmaster with his Whirry Whigs awa', and Logie o' Buchan, and Adam Skirving the Haddingtonshire farmer with his Hey Johnnie Cope. But it was not Jacobitism alone that awakened in Scotland that stormy

petrel of war and revolution, the song. It was responsible for hundreds of lyrics, many of them prosaic and dull. Lyricism extended to classes and districts and families that had, through the religious persecutions of the times of Charles the Second and James the Second, been driven into intense hatred of the Stuarts and their cause. The peasantry in the South had no sympathy with Jacobitism, and it was from them and the families of the gentry that were in touch with them, that most of the pathetic, amorous, and humorous songs of the time came. Allan Ramsay, and those who wrote for his Tea-table Miscellany, like Robert Crawford, author of The Bush Aboon Traquair, and Lady Grisell Baillie, the writer of "Were na my heart licht", had not yet caught the true inspiration; their songs are touched with the artificiality of the Queen Anne age. It was in the latter half of the century, when revolutionism, hot from America or France, was working Lowland thought into ferment, that the true lyric pathos became common. The time of the ballad, fiery though its narrative was, was long past. A more direct appeal to the emotions was needed; and every type of Scotchman and Scotchwoman was stirred to write song; it came from castle and hut, from the professions and the trades, from the puritan and the vagabond, from the farmer and the shepherd. There is no parallel to the phenomenon in the history of any literature. We have "There's nae luck about the house" from a poor schoolmistress, Jean Adams, "Ca' the yowes to the knowes" from Isobel Pagan, a drunken frequenter of fairs, Mary's Dream from John Lowe, a divinity student, Auld Robin Gray from Lady Anne Barnard, daughter of the Earl of Balcarres, the older version of The Flowers of the Forest from Jane Elliot, the daughter of Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto, himself a song writer, the new version from Mrs. Cockburn, wife of an Edinburgh advocate, Logan Braes from John Mayne, and "My only Jo and deary O" from Richard Gall, both compositors, Mary of Castlecary from Hector Macneil, a clerk, and after Burns's first volume, The Land o' the Leal, Caller Herrin, Hunting-Tower, The Laird o' Cockpen and several Jacobite songs, like "Will ye no come back again", and "Charlie is my darling", from Caroline Oliphant, afterwards Lady Nairn, Jenny Dang the Weaver, and

Jennie's Baubee from Sir Alexander Boswell, the son of Johnson's Boswell, and The Braes o' Balquhither, The Flower o' Dumblane, Gloomy Winter's now awa, and a dozen others, from Robert Tannahill, the Paisley weaver. These songs range through every key of human passion and emotion. Most of them had old Scotch music to guide them and old Scotch versions to revise. But in them all there is the true lyrical fervour that can find utterance only in the white heat of inspiration; each is a unity, and expresses one phase of emotion. And the mark of their truth to nature and their appeal to the heart of mankind is their continuous popularity even amongst those who are not familiar with the Scotch dialect.

8. It was into a lyrical atmosphere such as this that Robert Burns was born in January 1759. Round his childhood and youth it moved, and it passed into his inner nature. His mother, an Ayrshire farmer's daughter, had a store of songs and ballads; and an old woman, called Betty Davidson, who was much in his father's house, was never weary of singing old songs and reciting old ballads and telling old legends especially of the supernatural. The wonder would have been that when he wrote poetry it was anything but lyrical. Around him, too, was the atmosphere of education, as it was in every Scotch household last century. The Scottish peasant boy of that time had as good a chance of acquiring literary tastes and ambitions as the boy of the wealthy English middle class of to-day. He was taught and encouraged to read, and the schoolmasters were all university men, who were eager and able to teach him to compose in English. It is this that explains the extraordinary number of Scotchmen who take a considerable place in the English literature of the era. Burns began to write when he was seventeen or eighteen years of age. He was willing to let his first efforts die, except one fragment, which reveals his ambitions and leanings; the piece beginning,

"All devil as I am, a damned wretch,"

is a soliloquy in a blank verse melodrama like those written in the Queen Anne age by Rowe and Young; in spirit it is a curious anticipation of Byronism; but for its monotonous

rhythm it might be from Manfred. There is in it the fundamental attitude of revolutionism; his villain pities human wretchedness, sighs over the distress of the poor, sheds indignant tears over "the honest man's destruction", sorrows for "abandon'd vagabonds", scorns "the seeming good", and repents the abuse of the powers an injured God has given him. Here, when he was drudging on his father's farm, before he had diverged in the least from the puritan ideal of morality that guided his father's household, before he plunged into the amorous dissipation of his Tarbolton period, we have in this piece of artificiality and imitation the revolutionary creed of his life. He loves the rebel against all conventions, and has a lingering desire for rebellion against them; he is on the side of the poor and lowly and despised; he has a suspicion that it is laws and oppression and social and religious hypocrisies that ruin the world and make it sinful. As soon as he read Paradise Lost, he had a lurking sympathy with Satan in his pride and rebelliousness; and in his first volume, published when he was twenty-six, he puts this sympathy into his Address to the Deil.

> "I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
> Even for your sake".

It was only in exceptional circumstances that he abandoned the revolutionary attitude, when, towards the close of his life, the reactionary movement from the Napoleonic wars affected him, and he wrote (1795) two patriotic songs, "Does haughty Gaul invasion threat", and "Their groves of sweet myrtle let foreign lands reckon". His normal sympathies were on the side of democracy, freedom, and progress, and often on the side of the rebel and revolution.

9. He got clear of his factitious and foreign inspirations by the time that he was twenty-two. His first two lyrics, "I dreamed I lay where flowers were springing" (1776), and "On Cessnock banks there lives a lass" (1781), have still the fetters of the Queen Anne artificiality about them. So too has Winter, A Dirge, a cry of suppressed rebellion against his misfortunes, and John Barleycorn, a slight semi-allegorical piece of humour. But the true lyric note has begun to appear by 1781 in The rigs of barley, My Nannie

O, Now westlin winds and slaughtering guns, and Mary Morison. There is the careless, pleasure-loving atmosphere of the Tarbolton Lothario in the first two, and the quick jigging rhythm of the fiddle and the dance that belongs to so many of Burns's love songs and drinking songs. There is a deeper note in the last two, in the one sympathy with animals and hatred of the oppressor, and in the other the pathos of timid reverent love and the full sense of the simple diction of the lyric. In the song 'My Father was a Farmer upon the Carrick Border" we have the epicurean creed that came from his misfortunes and seemed to bring out the worst part of his nature through all his life; he could see no hope of rising above his fate, and he determined to enjoy the hour. In Poor Mailie, both the tale and the elegy, he reveals the keen insight into the feelings of the animals, that so distinguished Cowper, and was becoming one of the marks of the new philanthropy; he mourns with mingled humour and pathos over the death of his pet ewe. In this last we begin to see the rhythm and verse of Robert Fergusson, whose poems had been collected in 1773, the year before the death of that young Edinburgh satirist. The influence of his predecessor in Scottish verse became more and more apparent in the work of the next five years. He grew less lyrical, and devoted himself to satire and description. In his first volume, published at Kilmarnock in August 1786 to pay the expenses of his proposed emigration to the West Indies, most of the poems are in Fergusson's favourite stanza and in his style, although they far surpass their model in trenchant satire and poetic insight. The venture was a great success, and he was turned from his purpose, and spent a winter in Edinburgh getting his democratic pride and revolutionary principles more deeply ingrained by his insight into the manner in which society lionised him. The new edition of his poems, with some that he had written in 1785 added, was published in 1787 and realised such a sum as enabled him to lease another farm, Ellisland near Dumfries, where he lost it all, and sank into misfortune and ill health. He eked out a living for his wife and children as an excise-officer, and died in 1796 aged 37. This last is his great lyrical period, thanks to an agreement made during his Edinburgh sojourn with James Johnson of the Scots Musical Museum, a sort of lyrical magazine.

**10.** In his Edinburgh volume we have all his best non-lyrical poems, except his pathetic Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson, and his Tam O' Shanter, which were both written in 1790. And they reveal, perhaps with more clearness than his songs, how much he was a child of his time, how deeply the tragedy of his life had engraved the new creeds into his nature. Had prosperity made his father's and his own circumstances easy, we should not have had so passionate an expression of the growing sympathy with the oppressed; it runs through all his more serious poems; he seldom misses an opportunity to satirise the oppressor; perhaps the feeling is most apparent in the Twa Dogs, one of the best of his attempts to interpret the feelings of the animals in the style of the old fables; Caesar, the pampered dog of the upper classes, describes their life to Luath a "ploughman's collie", who in return descants on the sorrows and joys of the poor; the result is by no means to the advantage of "the gentry"; their extravagance, waste, corruption, hypocrisy, scandal-monging, ennui are painted with unsparing satire; Luath, the collie, gives us the shadow thrown by their oppression;

> "There's monie a creditable stock
> O' decent, honest, fawsont folk
> Are riven out baith root and branch,
> Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench".

The impression from the dialogue is that man in general has but a poor lot, but that the poor man has on the whole the best of it,

> ("They're maistly wonderfu' contented");

Caesar, the "gentleman and scholar", has much the lower opinion of human capacity,

> ("But human bodies are sic fools
> For a' their colleges and schools");

but both were

> "rejoiced they were na men but dogs".

This pessimism, which was one side of Rousseau's teaching and the dominant phase of pre-revolutionary thought, is even more pronounced in other poems; his "Address to a Mouse on turning her up in her nest with the plough, November 1785" is deeply imbued with the new care for

animal life; and it is as strong as Rousseau's books in the belief in the state of nature;

> "I'm truly sorry man's dominion
> Has broken nature's social union,
> And justifies that ill opinion
> Which makes thee startle
> At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
> And fellow-mortal."

Yet the woe of his lot is deepened in man by his foresight;

> "Still thou art blest, compared wi' me;
> The present only toucheth thee".

His "Man was made to mourn, A Dirge" is saturated with this pessimistic feeling over human oppression and wrong; he seems to approach to the socialistic indignation and creed of the advanced revolutionists;

> "Man's inhumanity to man
> Makes countless thousands mourn".
> "See yonder poor, o'er-labour'd wight,
> So abject, mean, and vile,
> Who begs a brother of the earth,
> To give him leave to toil;
> And see his lordly fellow-worm
> The poor petition spurn,
> Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife
> And helpless offspring mourn".
> "If I'm designed yon lordling's slave,
> By nature's law design'd,
> Why was an independent wish
> E'er planted in my mind?"
> "O Death! the poor man's dearest friend,
> The kindest and the best!"

The same note of sadness over the woes and wrongs of life is strong in A Winter Night, to some extent an echo of Shakespeare's Lear and Amiens' song in As You Like It, "Blow, blow thou bitter wind", Despondency, An Ode, an attempt in the style of Gray and Collins, praising the lot of the hermit, and To a Mountain Daisy,

> ("Such fate to suffering worth is given
> By human pride or cunning driven
> To misery's brink").

He is ever on the side of the poor, and seems to identify them with the honest. At least he counts misfortune often as the mark of honest purpose and life. He is never weary of insisting on the divinity of sincere and virtuous motive

and work, as against the ephemeral, man-made nature of titles and rank, wealth and position. In the Cottar's Saturday Night he enshrines a verse from Pope's Epistles—a common habit of his being to appropriate and bring out the force of favourite phrases from the poets; Pope's couplet is much feebler;

> "A wit's a feather and a chief a rod;
> An honest man's the noblest work of God."

Burns's setting revolutionises the meaning;—

> "Princes and lords are but the breath of kings;
> 'An honest man's the noblest work of God'.
> And certes in fair virtue's heavenly road
> The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
> What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
> Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
> Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd."

Perhaps the most concentrated expression of this basis of the Revolution is to be found in his rattling song "For a' that and a' that"; its chorus ending,

> "The rank is but the guinea stamp;
> The man's the gowd for a' that",

gives it an epigrammatic form. It almost deifies the "honest men" and "honest poverty"; and it closes with the revolutionary dream of the approaching brotherhood of humanity;

> "It's coming yet for a' that
> That man to man, the world o'er,
> Shall brothers be for a' that".

In all his numerous poetical appeals and addresses, To James Smith, To Davie a brother poet, To Gavin Hamilton, To John Lapraik an old Scottish bard, To William Simpson, To John Rankine, To Robert Graham, To Major Logan, To John Kennedy, there appear this pride of poverty and integrity and this demand for brotherhood; they make the very essence of his irony in his Address to the Deil. He evidently counted independent, virtuous humanity as the theme of his poetry; for he makes the Scottish Muse in The Vision say, when she is about to "bind the holly round his head",

> "Preserve the dignity of man
> With soul erect
> And trust the Universal Plan
> Will all protect."

It has often been urged or admitted that he did not always "preserve the dignity of man"; he admits himself as much in this very poem; the muse says,

> "I saw thy pulse's maddening play
> Wild send thee Pleasure's devious way,
> Misled by Fancy's meteor ray
> By Passion driven".

He makes her add the true explanation and defence;—

> "But yet the light, that led astray,
> Was light from Heaven".

He had the inspired poet's unstable equilibrium of nature, and he had come in a time when the drinking habits and loose morality of the century, handed down to it by the court of Charles the Second, had to be bold and even flippant in order to stand up in presence of the new criticism and the new demand for purity of life and sincerity of religion. Burns's enthusiastic and social disposition made him the natural prey of these customs of all classes, customs that were to suffer eclipse before his generation was out. We find him, therefore, continually sway between lapse and remorse for lapse; his poems now applaud the sin and again condemn and bewail the sinner. His repentance is as sincere as his indulgence. The misfortune is that what could be ignored and has been forgotten in most of the men of last century, both prominent and obscure, has been in his case made immortal by his poetry; there, are recorded all his breaches of what is now thought necessary to the "dignity of man", all his championship of outrage on convention and even moral law, in verse that cannot be forgotten; he made his own "evil manners live in brass"; he had the writing of his own epitaph, and it has been so etched in by the concentration of his satire and the fire of his lyrics that his virtues and his fundamental creed have fallen into oblivion.

II. It is one of the most tragic spectacles of last century, this strong soul buffeted by the cross-currents of the ages, and by the tempests of revolution. How often he falls back upon his father's creed and life, and tries to get refuge in them, only to find himself driven forth by his wild passions and the epicurean practices or revolutionary theories of the

time! His Cottar's Saturday Night with its noble picture of simple peasant virtue and household religion, his Prayer and Stanzas in the Prospect of Death, almost Biblical in their phraseology, his Epistle to a Young Friend (1786), with its praise of heart religion and its

> "An atheist's laugh's a poor exchange
> For Deity offended",

his Lines Written in Glenriddel Hermitage 1788 with its

> "Life is but a day at most
> Sprung from night, in darkness lost",

and

> "Reverence with lowly heart
> Him whose wondrous work thou art",

must be set over against his erotic and bacchanalian songs, and his satires that deal freely with religious names and ideas. In many of the latter he felt himself justified by his indignation against all hypocrisy and by the enthusiasm for revolutionism. He was with the progressive theology of the New Light preachers, who sympathised with the advance of science and philosophy, and opposed the conversatism of the Auld Light clergymen, men who would allow no tincture of reason in their sermons or creed. As in every age, the conflict between the old and the new in theology was very bitter, and especially so in Ayrshire. And Burns, following his father, naturally sympathised with the religion that took into account the new thought. His public reproof by a clergyman for seduction made him red-hot in his antagonism to all those who favoured the old-fashioned Calvinism, dogmatic preaching, fiery threats of future punishment, and authoritative interference with social life. Some of the Auld Lights were harsh and intolerant in the exercise of their functions, and a few of the most obnoxiously rigid, as in every creed, were hypocrites; hence The Holy Fair with its caustic picture of what a scoffer might see in a sacramental gathering, The Ordination with its bitter personalities, The Calf with its flippant but clever wit, The Address to the Unco Guid with its appeal for tolerance,

> ("Then gently scan your brother man,
> Still gentler sister woman"),

the milder ridicule of two quarreling preachers in The Twa Herds, and the vitriolic burlesque Holy Willie's Prayer. In the last he tears off the cloak of religious hypocrisy with

ruthless hand ; Holy Willie addresses Heaven as his special patron, and thanks God that he is not as other men are ; he assumes the deepest mock humility ; and in expressing gratitude for being kept from the sins of drinking and swearing and singing and dancing, confesses that he is "fash'd wi' fleshly lust", and asks pardon for his transgressions ; he accounts for the weakness by supposing that it has been sent to keep him from being too proud of his holiness ; he puts in a word against his special enemies, and flatters for the sake of future benefits. It is the climax of the poet's satiric powers. And we can see from his Epistle to the Rev. John McMath enclosing the poem that he meant by it to purify religion. He hates the hypocrisy of the ranters more than their doctrine, "their three-mile prayers and hauf-mile graces" ; he would rather be "an atheist clean" than hide his faults "under gospel colours".

> "All hail Religion ! maid divine !
> To stigmatise false friends of thine
> Can ne'er defame thee".

He acknowledges that there are many "manly preachers" in the church. And his satires did not a little to purge it of the faults he objected to.

**12.** His social satires and pictures are more genial, and some of them are even more felicitous in their phrases than these. Death and Doctor Hornbook is one of the most vivid and it has much of the biting vigour of Holy Willie's Prayer ; its satire is true against quacks in all ages. Tam Samson's Elegy, Scotch Drink, To a Haggis, To the Toothache, and To a Louse are in the same stanza he borrowed from Fergusson, and are more in the style of his model, unelevated as their themes. His Hallowe'en, and The Jolly Beggars, are faithful pictures of rough life, the one full of folk-superstitions, and the other of rattling lyrics of love and drink. His Brigs of Ayr a dialogue between the new and old bridge, with satiric touches on new customs, two of his Epistles to Robert Graham, and his theatrical prologues and addresses are in the heroic couplet, and show that he was not at his ease in the verse of Dryden and Pope ; he tends to be stilted and artificial. The verse, that he uses most naturally next to the stanza of Fergusson, is

the octosyllabic measure of Swift. He employs it in his Twa Dogs, in his Dedication to Gavin Hamilton, in his Lines written in Friars Carse Hermitage, and in the best of his poems, Tam O'Shanter; the short line and the easy construction of the rhyme suit his most humorous mood. The last he wrote in a day at Dumfries in 1790, and, for convivial pictures, beautiful and apt similes, absorbing narrative and the mixture of irony and superstition, it is unsurpassed; he is by turns the epicurean, the poet, the satirist, and the awed rustic; the only pieces that bear separation from their context are his similes;

> "As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
> The minutes winged their way wi' pleasure;
> Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
> O'er a' the ills o' life victorious.
> But pleasures are like poppies spread;
> You seize the flower, its bloom is shed,
> Or like the snowfall in the river,
> A moment white—then melts for ever".

13. But it cannot be said that he is at his very best in any of his poems. He shows himself at his feeblest in his epigrams, which exhibit more vigour in the intention than in the effect. It was as a lyrist that he fitted his nation, his age, and his own genius. No such body of song as his has ever been produced by any one period of any nation, let alone by any one man. He wrote close on three hundred lyrics, one half of which are equal to the best of any nationality. It is true, most of them were based on older songs, but, like Shakespeare, he turned the coarse metal of the originals into fine gold. They express every phase of human passion, and fit every variety of mood. There are Jacobite songs like "Here's a health to them that's awa", patriotic like "Scots wha hae" and "Does haughty Gaul invasion threat", political like "When Guilford good our pilot stood", and revolutionary like Address to General Dumourier, and "Is there for honest poverty"; there are ballads like "Lord Gregory ope thy door", and sentimental songs like Afton Water, My Nannie O, and Mary Morison, pathetic songs like "Ye Banks and Braes o' bonny Doon", and bacchanalian songs like "Willie brew'd a peck o' maut", and Auld Lang Syne; love songs like "O Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad", and The rigs o' barley, and songs of

domestic life "Of a' the airts the wind can blaw", and "John Anderson my jo"; songs of love and money like "O for ane and twenty, Tam", and "What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man", and humorous songs like "Last May a braw wooer", Willie Wastle, "Whistle owre the lave o't", and "The Deil's awa wi' the Exciseman"; nature songs like "Hark the mavis' evenin' sang", My Nannie's awa, and The Birks of Aberfeldy, and songs of incidents in his life like Highland Mary, To Mary in heaven, "There was a lad was born in Kyle", and "The gloomy night is gathering fast". Most of them have indeed a close connection with his life, and hence their vital quality. He seldom or never chose an artificial topic or occasion. Perhaps none are so near the perfection of simplicity as To Mary in Heaven, Mary Morison, and "Ae fond kiss and then we sever"; Byron and Scott agreed that nothing could surpass the pathos and intensity of the last, especially of this half stanza;—

> "Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
> Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
> Never met, or never parted,
> We had ne'er been broken-hearted".

It is in lines like these that we realise how much the age of the Revolution resembled in character and in lyrical power the age of Elizabeth. Burns brings out better than any poet of last century the depth of the revolutionary current in Britain.

## Section 23.

1. But there is another poet of contrasted character and genius who reveals it almost as well. It is William Cowper. Born in 1731, twenty-eight years before Burns, he did not begin to write poetry till the Scotch poet was writing his first lyrics. Their work is wholly contemporary and, though strongly contrasted in tone and expression, subject to the same influences. By the circumstances of their lives they came into close contact with nature as seen in the country and were moulded by it. They were driven back on the primitive sources of poetry and drank so deeply of them that the poetical conventions of the immediate past would not fit their emotions and ideas; they were children of

nature unfit for the intricate and artificial life of modern society and certain to lose themselves if they entered its labyrinth; they were satirists only by recoil from it, keenly sensitive as they were to its temptations, its vices, its inherent selfishness and cruelty, and its criticism and mockery. They loved their poetry as the only unfailing consolation of their lives; they wrote primarily, as the birds sing, to please themselves, to satisfy a strong instinct; thus they came nearer to the primitive attitude of poetry, to inspiration, to the mood of the balladists, than any English poet had come for a century or more. They could not long keep to their models; they had to speak as their emotions prompted them; and all artificiality of attempt or inspiration or theme led to immediate failure. They were thus the truest representatives of the new audience that had been secluded from public life and highly organised society for so many generations. They led poetry back to mother earth, to its primitive elements, to its essential soil, and they gave it a language nearer to the simplicity of nature. Their hearts were open to the larger influences of the coming age, as no cultured or city poets could have been. In the turbid atmosphere of political or social life it is only the immediate issues that can be seen, and the tendencies that are about to dominate seem to have no more importance than ephemeral cries, or movements that are about to vanish; out in the open of a time the passionate spirit feels what is elemental and what is local and evanescent. These two poets were, therefore, each in his own way, the singers of the new time, the preachers of revolutionism; they taught naturally and unconsciously what Rousseau made a dogmatic creed; without in the least knowing that they had any resemblance to the French forerunner of the Revolution, they were ever appealing to nature as nearer the ideal standard and inspiring recoil from the artificiality of human conventions. They were keenly conscious of the hypocrisies and corruptions of society and felt at least comparatively solaced in the woeful struggles of life by sympathy with the oppressed and lowly, by intercourse with the simplicity of nature and by giving utterance to its melody or sorrow in verse. They were ever lauding freedom though Burns coquetted with Jacobitism and Cowper was

opposed to the American struggle for independence. They had both a deep belief in the sublimities of the puritan faith their audience held, though they differed widely in their expression of it. They both satirised the church for the hypocrisies and mistaken missions that took refuge in it, though Burns flippantly sympathised with the heterodox and progressive preachers and Cowper earnestly followed the new evangelical movement. Burns was a puritan in spite of his epicurean and rebellious tendencies, Cowper a lover of nature and revolutionist, in spite of his predestinarian stoicism and Calvinistic faith. It was to keep off the deep gloom of their inner thoughts of the world and man that they often trifled with lighter themes; they sang to keep up their spirits like children in the dark. They were true products of a revolutionary time, poets bewildered by its cross-currents and by the lightning-flashes across its gloom, and glad to take refuge in the melodious expression of their doubt and sadness.

2. But Cowper was a preacher either by nature or circumstances. Burns was a lyrist both born and made; he addressed a section of the new audience that was essentially lyrical by tradition and tastes. Cowper discovered his poetic gift through religious lyricism; he had written a few love-lyrics in youth; but his first real effort in verse was his share of the Olney Hymns published in 1779, when he was nearly fifty years of age. He had to address a section of the new audience that was essentially didactic; it was the puritan part of the middle class, roused to new enthusiasm by Wesley and Whitefield and other preachers, that he had to write for. He began his true career as poet in December 1780 when he was fifty years of age; although in one of the attacks of his mental malady he had been under the care of a writer of light society verses, Dr. Nathaniel Cotton, he had never thought of poetry as a relief from the despondency that ever threatened renewed attacks, till he had come under the influence of his evangelical friends at Olney—the Rev. John Newton and the Unwins. Mrs. Unwin suggested the occupation and its themes; and in 1782 was published his first volume, containing amongst other poems his Table Talk, Progress

of Error, Conversation, Retirement, and Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk. The book was anything but successful, one critic in The Critical Review calling it "flat and tedious", "coarse, vulgar, and unpoetical". But one or two favourable comments, especially one by Benjamin Franklin encouraged him, and, at the suggestion of Lady Austen, another Olney friend, he started The Task in blank verse and published it with three other poems in 1785. The ballad John Gilpin was one of the three pieces, and, having before been recited by an actor Henderson all over the country with great success, called attention to the other poems. They became at once popular and raised him to the foremost position amongst the poets of his day. He then entered on his period of translation and issued his Homer in 1791. Before his death in 1800, in the midst of threatening madness, ill health, and sorrow over the death of old friends, he translated the Latin and Italian poems of Milton, the Latin poems of Vincent Bourne, and various pieces from the Latin and Greek classics.

3. He had been trained at Westminster School under Vincent Bourne the Latinist and in a scribbling set that had literary ambitions, Robert Lloyd who afterwards wrote a satire in octosyllabic couplets called The Actor, George Colman the actor, dramatist, and translator, Warren Hastings, and Churchill the satirist. He joined a number of them in 1754 in the Nonsense Club and wrote some papers, moralising, and humorous, to the essay-periodical The Connoisseur, started by Colman in 1754-56; some of these in their theme and manner (for example On Conversation) anticipate his first poetic satires. He also contributed one or two articles to The St. James's Chronicle, another of Colman's ventures, and published a translation of two books of Voltaire's Henriade in a magazine in 1759. In his posthumous poems too we find that he had been dabbling in verse from boyhood; and his youthful attempts show that he had been experimenting in the directions which he afterwards adopted. In 1748 when seventeen years of age, he uses blank verse in the mock-heroic style "On finding the heel of a shoe"; though feeble it is quite in the manner of The Task; after the mock invocation and the satiric

picture of the shoe and its original wearer it draws the moral for statesmen. He imitates Waller and Prior and society-verse writers and ode writers of his day. Many of them are humorous and trifling, as for example On Himself, A Song to Celia advising her to give up girlish airs now she is old, Upon a venerable Rival, An Epistle to Robert Lloyd in octosyllabics apologising for his not letting poetry alone since he has neither genius nor will and making pathetic reference to the threatening madness "fierce banditti" of the brain, (1754), and a burlesque Ode "Secundum artem" after the style of Gray and Collins. A large number are amorous addressed to Delia, and a pathetic light is thrown on them by the story of his youthful passion for his cousin Theodora and its fate in her father's refusal to allow their marriage. They are as graceful and musical as some of Burns's average songs and suggest that a happier life might have made him the lyrist that his time demanded. He has one or two translations of the satires of Horace, one or two in the stanza of Gray's Elegy, and one or two in the heroic couplet. Thus he anticipates both the verse and the manner of his mature poems. The only experiment he did not repeat again was a pathetic poem in unrhymed Sapphics called "Lines written under the influence of Delirium".

> "Damned below Judas, more abhorred than he was,
> Who for a few pence sold his holy Master!
> Twice betrayed Jesus me the last delinquent
> Deems the profanest".

He also produced several "half-penny ballads" which have been lost.

4. His fear of having to appear in the House of Lords to claim a post that a relative had given him developed the often-threatened madness in 1763. When he recovered he retired first to Huntingdon and then to Olney where he endeavoured by simple pursuits and the help of his friends to keep off other attacks. His Olney Hymns, though some of them have simple fervour like "Oh for a closer walk with God!" and "God moves in a mysterious way," exhibit none of the poetic power that he revealed a year or two after their publication; the same may be said of a poem called Anti-thelyphthora, attacking his cousin Madan's book, Thelyphthora, on the polygamous doctrines

of the Old Testament; it was printed anonymously in 1781 and was "willingly let die". It is in heroic couplets, partly on the model of Churchill, partly on that of Pope. The satire is not trenchant, nor is the mock-heroic chivalry graceful.

5. It was his old school-companion Churchill he took as his model when he began his mature poetic work. Mrs. Unwin suggested The Progress of Error as the subject of a moral satire (December 1780) and the poem was soon written. It was crude in its art and harsh in its spirit, guided as it was by the unreasoning didacticism that surrounded the poet. He runs through all the pet aversions of the old puritans, writing as he was for the new audience descended from them; instrumental music, cards, dancing, and hunting he counts as deadly sins for the clergy;

> "Oh! laugh, or mourn with me, the rueful jest,
> A cassocked huntsman and a fiddling priest".

His flock follow;

> "If he the tinkling harpsichord regards
> As inoffensive, what offence in cards?
> Strike up the fiddles! let us all be gay!
> Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play."

Gluttony and drinking he pictures with some vigour;

> "Gorgonius sits abdominous and wan,
> Like a fat squab upon a Chinese fan".

Novel-reading and novel-writing he next attacks. And then he satirically describes the education of the young man of the time, who, after the school and university, travels with a tutor, and, returning, "proclaims,"

> "By shrugs and strange contortions of the face
> How much a dunce that has been sent to roam
> Excels a dunce that has been kept at home".

He closes with an attack on critics and interpreters of the Bible, on the "god of our idolatry, the Press" which "makes earth the vestibule of hell," and on philosophy, speculation, and free-thinking. The style at the beginning, in spite of an occasional line like "Musical as the chime of tinkling rills," is very prosaic; for example,

> "Heaven from above and Conscience from within
> Cry in his startled ear, 'Abstain from sin'".

But it becomes more trenchant and the satire more pointed as the poem proceeds.

6. His next attempt was Truth. And the first part of this is a great improvement on his former satire. He begins in the sermonising vein, and very inaptly compares the pharisee to the peacock, "A praying synagogue-frequenting beau", and the true Christian to the pheasant. He then gives a picture of the Christian hermit and the Bramin self-tormentor, and on the whole prefers the latter. But his satirical portrait of the "ancient-prude" shows his real power; it is as vigorous and realistic as anything in Hogarth's pictures; she

> "Sails with lappet-head and mincing airs,
> Duly at clink of bell to morning prayers".

Behind her

> "The shivering urchin, bending as he goes,
> With slip-shod heels and dew-drop at his nose",
> "Carries her Bible tucked beneath his arm,
> And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm."

She counts herself "half an angel", because "she fasts and item goes to church"; narrates fictions of "who spanned her waist" and drank out of her slipper; "laughs at the reputations she has torn", and feeds on malice whilst she mortifies the flesh. "True piety", he adds, "is cheerful as the day". He compares the good servant and the base hireling; has a long-drawn and feeble simile for the sinner alarmed; and draws a contrast between Voltaire, "the brilliant Frenchman" to whom "the Scripture was a jest-book", and "yon cottager who weaves at her own door", and "just knows and knows no more the Bible true". This is the most striking part of the poem and thereafter he falls into pulpiteering that becomes once or twice eloquent, but is usually prosaic.

7. Then followed Table Talk, the most desultory poem in the volume. It is practically a panegyric of liberty, of the past, of the true poet, and of religion as the true theme of poetry. But it is in the form of a dialogue like many of Churchill's; the speakers are simply called A and B, B evidently representing the poet himself, and A a somewhat subtle and carping critic of his theories. They begin on

glory and the curse of war; B passes from a eulogy of the true patriot to a picture of the warlike tyrant, a "royal mastiff" panting for blood, better represented by Death and his scythe. "Man was made for kings" is the maxim of the seldom logical "royal brains". Kings made for men is the true maxim. "Blest England! if this happiness be thine". He will not flatter or lie like a poet-laureate. He pities kings, brought up as they are, amid flattery, servility, and dissimulation,

> "Smooth dissimulation skilled to grace
> A devil's purpose with an angel's face";

he would rather be poor and free than a king. A objects it is easy for a poet to come from "dreaming study", and "prate and preach what others prove"; better if he took a practical subject like taxation.

> "Not Brindley nor Bridgewater would essay
> To turn the course of Helicon that way",

is the reply, a reply that reveals awakening criticism of the didactic schools of poetry that had so long held sway. The Briton's love of freedom is then suggested as a theme. And he explains it as a product of nature, of the rigorous climate. France has a softer climate; hence

> "The Frenchman, easy, debonair and brisk,
> Give him his lass, his fiddle and his frisk,
> Is always happy, reign whoever may,
> And laughs the sense of misery away".

Nature is here almost identified with Providence by the poet. And, when it is objected that if Providence can "encourage slavery to a smile" and "fill with discontent a British isle", freedom and slavery come to the same, he shows that freedom raises the mind, makes the nature noble, encourages genius, science, religion. He bewails license and tumult, and, in panegyrising Chatham, holds that freedom neither came to life nor died with him. He confesses the evils that exist, venality, perjury,

> ("Stamps God's own name upon a lie just made
> To turn a penny in the way of trade"),

avarice, vice, mutiny; and the tyranny and ruin as the inevitable result of luxury; but he feels that all is in the hand of God. At the sneer from A, "mean you to prophesy or but to preach", he answers by showing that the true poet is also

the prophet and by refusing the name of poet ("I play with syllables and sport in song"). A says he wrote at Westminster school when a boy; but verse now must have a "creamy smoothness" to charm; it depends on the ear, and

> "A man of sense could scarce do worse
> Than caper in the morris-dance of verse".

B too objects to the poetry of the day for its artificiality, its frivolity, its meaningless and hackneyed verse, and its "clockwork tintinnabulum of rhyme". The age of epic comes rarely. In Eden "poetry was not an art", but flowed naturally with "God the theme". Next it praised heroes and kings; then, under the influence of luxury, became lascivious and bacchanal; Anacreon and Horace played this "bedlam part". He objects as much to the puritan ideal "harsh, intolerant, austere", and seems to be expressing his usual defence of his art to the Rev. John Newton's stoical condemnation of it, and to his own puritan tendencies. With Charles the Second came Circean riot into literature; and the century was purging it of "wantonness". Pope had great "musical finesse", and a most "delicate touch"; but he

> "Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
> And every warbler has his tune by heart".

Of contemporaries he praises Churchill alone, and writes a most eulogistic epitaph on his old school-fellow, acknowledging at the same time his "negligence"; "spendthrift alike of money and of wit", he "disdained the rules he understood". Churchill corrected by Pope is evidently still what he admires and aims at. He paints the ideal poet, instinct with nature, and mourns that religion has never been the theme of poetry. A interjects;

> "Hail Sternhold then and Hopkins hail!"

and he answers "amen"; they could shift if all the secular poetry were lost.

8. His fourth poem Expostulation was ready by March 1781. It is manifestly an attempt to carry out the suggestion at the close of Table Talk. For it is a jeremiad over the neglect of religion in England. He compares the country to Israel, and evidently considers it the chosen land of modern times, if only it will purge itself of its vices and

acknowledge the hand of God in everything. There are few of the felicities of the three previous poems; he is too earnest to be epigrammatic or paint satiric portraits of types. He gives a sketch of the history of Britain from the point of view of an evangelical Jeremiah, and though there are some good pictures, they are unrelieved by wit or humour, and are heavy with sermonising.

9. Much the same fault belongs to "Hope" and "Charity", two that he wrote at the suggestion of his publisher to fill out his volume whilst it awaited publication. They are versified sermons of the most hackneyed type, yet touched here and there into life by a strain of eloquence or a satiric portrait. They are long, Hope being as long as Table Talk, and they are full of the commonplaces of the pulpit, text and simile, reference and persuasion, that seem to have lost their life from repetition even by Cowper's time, so automatically do they roll off in periods. The heroic couplet makes them still more monotonous and soporific. The only relief is here and there a picture done with the true feeling and insight of the new poet. In Hope there are the portraits of Jonquil the blasé follower of fashion,

("with almost every breath,
Sighs for his exit, vulgarly called death"),

of the schoolboy tyrant, of Vinosa, the wine-drinking defender of good works against grace,

("The Christian hope is—Waiter draw the cork—
If I mistake not—Blockhead! with a fork!—
Without good works, whatever some may boast,
Mere folly and delusion—Sir, your toast."),

and of Sir Smug, the pompous patron, who is lauded by his guests as a prophet and oracle. But perhaps the most vivid episode of the poem is the picture of the life and character of Whitefield, the great preacher.

"Leuconomus (beneath well-sounding Greek
I slur a name a poet must not speak,)
Stood pilloried on infamy's high stage,
And bore the petty scorn of half an age."
"Reveal (the man is dead) to wondering eyes
This more than monster in his proper guise.
He loved the world that hated him; the tear
That dropped upon his Bible was sincere.
Assailed by scandal and the tongue of strife,
His only answer was a blameless life."

The purple patches of "Charity" are a picture of Captain Cook's treatment of the savages he met, contrasted with the Spaniards' treatment of the Peruvians, an eloquent denunciation of slavery, an attack upon philosophy, speculation, and teaching, that are not religious, a satirical portrait of Flavia the alms-giver,

> ("Her superfluity the poor supplies,
> But if she touch a character, it dies.")

and one of the squire, who finds amongst his guineas his smallest gold coin for charity, to gratify "fame and self-complacence". Perhaps the most vigorous part of it is a diatribe against the satire popular in his day;

> "When Scandal has new-minted an old lie,
> Or taxed invention for a fresh supply,
> 'Tis called a Satire, and the world appears
> Gathering around it with erected ears;
> A thousand names are tossed into the crowd;
> Some whispered softly and some twanged aloud."
> "Strange! how the frequent interjected dash
> Quickens a market and helps off the trash;
> The important letters that include the rest
> Serve as a key to those that are suppressed."

But the didactic overshadows these. He was still held by the idea of versifying Newton's sermons on abstract themes, such favourites still with the religious section of the new audience.

**10.** Whilst waiting for the publishing season he wrote two other poems to please himself and to fill up the book. Their themes were Conversation and Retirement; and here he struck upon his true poetical career, the Addisonian essay turned into verse and tinged with genuine poetry. He could not long be kept off his mission as "monitor not poet"; but didactic and religious passages were in these only episodic and not the main current. They were the longest poems in the volume, but the most entertaining and most felicitous in expression. The first half of Conversation contained more vigorous satire and flashes of epigram than any poem in English since Pope. It draws the portraits of the various types of conversationalists with the broad power and minute insight of Hogarth. It begins with a vigorous onslaught on conventional talk, on prurience, and

on swearing; then enters on its portrait-gallery; Sir Soph, the universally contradictory man,

> ("Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate,
> A duel in the form of a debate";
> "For opposition gives opinion strength";
> "A noisy man is always in the right");

Dubius, who

> "Would not with a peremptory tone
> Assert the nose upon his face his own",
> "Through constant dread of giving truth offence,
> He ties up all his hearers in suspense";

the positive men,

> "Where others toil with philosophic force,
> Their nimble nonsense takes a shorter course";

the tedious story-teller and the lying story-teller; the smokers,

> "The dozen sages drop the drowsy strain,
> Then pause and puff, and speak and pause again";

the emphatic speaker,

> "dearly loves to oppose,
> In contact inconvenient, nose to nose";

the "fine puss-gentleman that's all perfume"; the "grave coxcomb", "an oracle within an empty cask", "a fool with judges, amongst fools a judge"; the discoursers on their own health,

> "They thought they would have died they were so bad,
> Their peevish hearers almost wish they had";

the fretful and capricious,

> "His only pleasure is to be displeased";

the bashful man; the "reeking, roaring hero of the chase" who falls in companionship from horse to groom, from groom to the club, "the school of coarse good fellowship and noise", "till none but beasts acknowledge him a man". The latter half of the poem falls back into the sermonising vein and closes with a defence of his digressive style and his didactic.

**11.** In Retirement he is getting more out of the range of the dead satirist Churchill and the living preacher Newton. He approaches nearer to the secluded yet secular part of the new audience and sings the attractions of peace and solitude with nature. He paints the weary routine of business,

"that oar,
Which thousands, once fast-chained to, quit no more",

and the desire its slavery generates to seek some "sequestered spot", and "having lived a trifler, die a man". With all his love of meditative and religious retirement, he would not approve "a superstitious and monastic course". Even the worldly seek seclusion. Some

"Hate the tumult half the world enjoys",

and love

"the fall of waters and the song of birds",
"The clouds that flit or slowly float away";

these are the "bards" that "seek success in rhyme". The lover, "tender idolater of absent charms", and the statesman, "the disencumbered Atlas of the state", make for solitude. The citizen seeks his "suburban villa", and "breathes clouds of dust and calls it country air". "Modern belles", instead of going to Bristol baths and Tunbridge wells, as their "prudent grandmammas" did, "fly to the coast for daily, nightly joys". The spendthrift youth gets through his fortune and seeks retirement in the post of a groom. But it is no easy thing to enjoy seclusion;

"Absence of occupation is not rest,
A mind quite vacant is a mind distressed".

The age is full of such idleness. "Luxury gives the mind a childish cast"; and "thinking heads" become rare, till authors hear

"at length one general cry,
Tickle and entertain us or we die".

This loud demand for amusement "makes fancy lame", and novels "offer nothing new". The best of the poem consists in the pictures of nature

"Fast by the banks of the slow-winding Ouse".

He is becoming more and more the nature-poet, and less and less a mere satirist and preacher.

**12.** The minor poems published along with these were significant only as showing the lyrical current of the age; the best were the lines beginning "I am monarch of all I survey", and Boadicea. A few of them were in the form of fables, and dealt with the moral in the humorous and allegorical style of Gay.

13. In March 1782 the volume was published, and was received coldly, even by his old school-fellows Lord Chancellor Thurlow and Colman the dramatist, to whom he sent copies. Cowper bade farewell to the latter for his heartlessness in "Valediction". He soon recovered from the disappointment; for he had made another new friend, Lady Austen, who got him to write some shorter pieces like John Gilpin. And it was at her suggestion that he began in the summer of 1783 The Task, his greatest poem. She asked him to write in blank verse and gave him as subject the "Sofa" on which he sat. The liberation from the heroic couplet seemed to set free at the same time all his powers of thought and melody, his love of nature, his simpler unsermonising views of life and all the new thoughts and emotions that belonged to the new time. He diverged from his original theme into every topic that his rambles in the neighbourhood could suggest, and so much pleasure did he take in this new "Task" set him, that the long poem (over five thousand lines) appeared in June 1785. He had found both the right medium—blank verse—and the right atmosphere—that of nature—to work in. It is the only blank verse poem between Paradise Lost and the Excursion that can be called a classic. It raised him at once into all but the front rank of English poets.

14. The Sofa, or Book I. begins in his old half-humorous style with the evolution of seats; then, in descanting on the woes of gout and praying that he may never feel them, he diverges into the joys of rambling in youth; this brings him to his own walks by the "slow-winding Ouse" with his "dear companion",

> "Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
> Fast locked in mine."

He paints the ploughman at his work in the distance, and every feature of the scene; he tells of the sounds of nature, of the cottage on the hill, that he had called the "Peasant's Nest," of the splendid grounds of his friend Mr. Throckmorton, the "fleecy tenants" streaming out from the sheepfold, the various tints of the trees, and the grove; he descants on the rotation of nature, on her superiority to art,

("The love of nature and the scenes she draws
Is Nature's dictate"),

on the repulsive sights of London society, and the beauty of the sea-girt rock and the common; he paints crazy Kate, the gipsy camp, and the savage of the South seas who had visited England; he mourns over the luxury of London and her vices ("God made the country, man made the town"), and this wail passes into a description of the beauty of rustic scenes;

("At eve,
The moonbeam sliding softly in between
The sleeping leaves is all the light they wish").

15. The contrast suggests the theme of the second book, the degeneracy of his time. He calls it The Time-piece, perhaps because it tells the hour the world has reached, the hour of midnight of the race of man. It is instinct with the eloquence of indignation. He cannot restrain his anger over the effeminacy and futile worship of fashion that make the aristocracy, the clergy, the universities so incapable of their true duties. It is another jeremiad like Expostulation, but how different! In the heroic couplet he is ever falling into the sing-song and the abstract didacticism of eighteenth century poetry and preaching; here a living passion seems to inspire every word; he is a true prophet come to tell England of her sins and make her repent; he often rises to sublimity that is almost Miltonic. He still longs for solitude "a lodge in some vast wilderness", his "ear is so pained" with report of "wrong and outrage with which earth is filled". Like Burns he longs for the brotherhood of man, yet finds it "severed as the flax at the touch of fire". Slavery still blots the earth; and yet slaves "touch our country and their shackles fall". He has strongly in him the new philanthropy and love of freedom. But tempests, earthquakes, meteors, plagues, famine "preach the general doom"; he paints with great power the ruin spread by an earthquake in Sicily. Yet he thinks England, which with all her faults he loves still, more guilty than that chastised island. For soldiers and patriot orators she now has "effeminates",

"as smooth,
"And tender as a girl, all essenced o'er
With odours".

He evidently remembers Hotspur's description of the fop ambassador in Shakespeare's Henry the Fourth. Chatham and Wolfe are dead;

> "praise enough,
> To fill the ambition of a private man,
> That Chatham's language was his mother's tongue,
> And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own".

All that England has now to teach France is "superior jockeyship". The audience of poetry has grown "fastidious or else listless". It is not mere satire that is needed;

> "Leviathan is not so tamed;
> Laughed at, he laughs again".

Earnest teaching from the pulpit is essential; not sermons bought from "the Doctor", "grand caterer and dry-nurse of the church". He appeals to the bishops not to lay

> "careless hands
> On skulls that cannot teach and will not learn";
> "The things that mount the rostrum with a skip
> And then skip down again; pronounce a text,
> Cry hem! and reading what they never wrote,
> Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work
> And with a well-bred whisper close the scene".

He scorns all affectation and loves simplicity. He hates the facetious preacher, who courts a grin when he should woo a soul, and seeks popular applause; he hates the philosophic and histrionic pulpiteer. He explains for his "gentle reader yet unborn" the wooden "monitor", evidently a board strapped on to the back to keep the body erect, "one proof at least of manhood", but evidently the only one in the age. He launches into indignant satire on the frequenters of society,

> "She that asks
> Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all
> And hates their coming. They (what can they less?)
> Make just reprisals and with cringe and shrug
> And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her".
> "So fare we in this prison-house of the world;
> And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see
> So many maniacs dancing in their chains".

"Profusion is the sire" of all this; and "it is a hungry vice". It has taken all virtue away, it has killed the sage Discipline at the universities,

> "where Ignorance instils,
> His cap well lined with logic not his own,
> With parrot tongue performed the scholar's part,
> Proceeding soon a graduated dunce".

He closes with a pathetic eulogy of his dead brother and a wail over the spawn, the "race obscene", with which profusion fills the land.

**16.** In the third book called The Garden he falls back under the influence of the eighteenth century spirit. The verse is more monotonous, the method more palpably didactic, the judgment and principles often retrograde. There is the same theme, the contrast between the overgrown, turbulent, and vicious city and the peaceful and innocent pleasures of the country. But he has got into his preaching mood again, and he is satisfied with the moral, and little anxious to send it home by felicitous phrase or picture. He apostrophises domestic happiness twice, condemns science, especially geology and astronomy, for their audacity in trying to discover truth, their toil of "dropping buckets into empty wells", yet praises Newton, Milton, and Sir Matthew Hale, goes into tedious prosaic details about pruning and making a hot-bed and attending to a greenhouse, and ends with an attack on gambling and over-improving estates, and an apostrophe to London, the "crowded coop". His description of gardening is quite on a level with the most prosaic of eighteenth century didactic poems like Dyer's Fleece and Grainger's Sugar Cane; it is almost bathos;—

> "The stable yields a stercoraceous heap
> Impregnated with quick fermented salts".
> "Then leisurely impose,
> And lightly, shaking it with agile hand,
> From the full fork, the saturated straw".

The most interesting passages are the autobiographical, especially that beginning

> "I was a stricken deer that left the herd
> Long since",

the description of the true lovers of the country, the condemnation of the "detested sport", hunting, and the compassionate picture of the hare which he has fed for ten years. This last is to be placed along with Burns's Addresses to a Mouse and to a Daisy, and his "On Seeing a Wounded Hare Limp by me, which a fellow had just shot at", as a true product of the new sympathy with lower life. And in it he approaches again to the attitude of Rousseau.

17. In the fourth book called The Winter Evening he gets into his true vein as painter of the joys of peaceful home-life in the country. He becomes again the melodious versifier of the half-humorous, half-meditative social essay. He gets clear of his eighteenth century didacticism and chats in melodious verse on topics that exactly suited the new audience; and in the course of the book he confesses himself "reclaimed" from his "erroneous taste" for "ingenious Cowley"; whilst he rejects all Arcadian pictures of rural felicity, such as Virgil and Sir Philip Sidney give. He abandons secondhand or artificial poetic raptures and looks with his own eyes on the world around him. Hence the attractive pictures of the cosy home on a winter's night with the "bubbling urn", the "cups that cheer but not inebriate" (a phrase from Bishop Berkeley's Siris), the arrival of the post-boy with the newspaper and all its echoes of the outside world, the suggestions of the snowstorm, the struggling waggoner, and the sweet twilight gaze into the "flickering fire". Hence too the pictures of the winter-pinched yet honest poor, of the fowl-yard plunderer, and of the village alehouse, an intentional contrast with its "stale debauch" and "cheek-distending oath" to Goldsmith's rose-coloured scene. In the latter part of the book he mourns as usual over the degenerate days in which his lot has fallen. He attributes the growing immorality and crime to fashion, ("the town has tinged the country"), to the desertion of their country-houses by the gentry and nobility, to the corruption amongst magistrates, to "universal soldiership", the soldier returning with low tastes to corrupt his home and village, and to the growth of commercial and other companies, which "build factories with blood". He closes with an assertion that the love of nature is "born with all" and is never completely quenched even in the city. The description of the newspaper must have been written contemporaneously with Crabbe's Newspaper (1785), and shows how the increase of journalism was a new feature of country life that was changing its face.

18. The first part of the fifth book, The Winter Morning Walk, contains perhaps the finest poetic picture of winter scenes in English; they are the product of the keenest

powers of observation and the most loving fancy; phrases, like

> "half petrified to sleep
> In unrecumbent sadness"

of cattle waiting on the snow for their fodder, and

> "Lean pensioners upon the traveller's track"

of the rooks after a snowstorm are whole pictures in themselves. There follows his habitual indignation at war; but here it passes into revolutionism; he shows the inflated paltriness and tyrannical injustice of kings,

> "The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp,
> Storks among frogs";

and bursts into a glowing panegyric of freedom; and in this occurs the famous passage descriptive of the Bastille and its horrors.

> "There's not an English heart that would not leap
> To hear that ye were fallen at last,"

is his cry that was to be answered seven years after. He mourns over England, yet loves her still as the home of freedom. The latter half is his versified sermon, to which his own earnestness, his idea of the poet's mission, and the section of the new audience he addressed all prompted him. It consists of a picture of man's depravity, an attack on the futility of the deism of the time, a comparison of patriots and martyrs and of their treatment by Hume the historian, and an eloquent address to the Creator.

19. The last book, The Winter Walk at Noon, is the longest; it contains much noble eloquence and much somewhat tedious didacticism, many pictures of nature, and one or two satiric touches. He begins with the sound of distant bells and the memories they awaken. And, as he walks under the cloudless vault or beneath umbrageous trees, he meditates, and thinks

> "meditation here
> May think down hours to moments";

he sees that wisdom is won by such meditation in

> "Lanes in which the primrose ere her time
> Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root";

and wisdom differs from knowledge. He dilates upon the beauty of the various flowers and the change that spring works; nature evincing

> " that there lives and works
> A soul in all things and that soul is God ".

This looks like the shadowy pantheism of Wordsworth; but some fifty lines farther on he corrects his language;

> " Nature is but a name for an effect
> Whose cause is God ".

He condemns the chess and billiards and shopping that keep men and women at noon from looking into nature; and he laughs at the would-be connoisseur in pictures who hangs about auction-rooms with

> " Tongue accomplished in the fulsome cant
> And pedantry "

of art-criticism. Better to seek the loveliness of nature and the innocent sympathy with animal life in which Cowper seems to anticipate the American solitary Thoreau. He breaks into another eloquent attack on sportsmen;

> " Carnivorous through sin,
> Feed on the slain, but spare the living brute ".

He tells a story of a young atheist Misagathus or Hater of Good, who in braggart mood tries to ride over a cliff, but is checked by his horse, though afterwards the horse throws him from the saddle on to the rocks below. The poet " would not enter on his list of friends " the man, however polished, who " needlessly sets foot upon a worm ". The latter part of the book is a long depreciation of human encomiums of man; however great like Handel or Garrick, men should never cover them with fulsome praise. He ends by defending his habit of seclusion.

**20.** The poem is important in the evolution of English poetry more for its themes and method of treatment of them than for its originality or the lasting nature of its music. It revealed that the quiet religious middle-class were about to join the audience of poetic literature and be its controlling element. The Task emanated from their atmosphere and was written for them; and its great popularity proved that the literary sceptre was about to pass from the hands of city

worldlings and critics. This meant the complete purification of literature, its return to simpler tastes and simpler language, a new sympathy with nature and a new reverence for religious and earnest thought. Cowper was the first to attempt the task of addressing both the old and the new audience; his satire was meant for the one, his sermons and his praise of the country and nature for the other. He failed; for he came too early in the movement to get the elements to combine: the secular and the religious passages in his poems are only mechanically united. Not till Wordsworth and Coleridge, Browning and Tennyson, was English poetry able to amalgamate the contrastive methods and atmospheres. They rejected both the satire and the sermon, and worked out the reverent study of both man and nature that was the growing element in Cowper's poems. The earlier poet failed because he wrote from the one camp and had to preach at and attack the other. But his failure was a brilliant one and the surest symptom of the passionate poetry that was to follow the Revolution.

**21.** His Tirocinium or A Review of Schools, a recommendation of home teaching, published along with The Task, was a retrogression with its religious didacticism and satire and its use of the heroic couplet. His attempts at other long poems on The Four Ages of Man, on The Mediterranean, and on Yardley Oak he soon abandoned. He persevered at his translation of Homer, when he might have been better employed in original work. After the paralysis of Mrs. Unwin it was only into his smaller pieces that he put his real poetic power; his simple dirge over the The Loss of The Royal George, his pathetic lines On The Receipt of my Mother's Picture out of Norfolk, and the two melancholy lyrics that were the outcome of the gathering gloom, To Mary, and The Castaway, show better than any of his poems the direction English poetry was to take and anticipate the directness and the simple emotions of the Lyrical Ballads.

**22.** They also show the tendency to poems of a few stanzas like the ballads and songs; Percy's Reliques gave a great impetus to this; but still more the increase of periodicals, to the poets' corner of which it became the

ambition of every man and woman of taste and of poetic sentiment to contribute. The number of minor poets in the period is therefore legion; for there was no great poet to overshadow their attempts and make them feel their insignificance, whilst the approach of prose and poetry in the previous age made many feel competent in verse, and the new spirit of romance spread the sentiment of poetry widely.

## Section 24.

1. A few names that have not been buried in the oblivion of the magazines may be given. Edward Moore, the author of the drama The Gamester, is known for his lyric The Happy Marriage, Dodsley the publisher for his song The Parting Kiss, David Mallet the Scotch friend of Gibbon for his ballad William and Margaret, John Byrom for his Elizabethan lyric Careless Content, Smollett the novelist for his Tears of Scotland, Blackstone of the Commentaries for his Lawyer's Farewell to his Muse, John Cunningham the actor for his song Kate of Aberdeen, Michael Bruce the Scotch poet (cut off in his youth) for his Elegy Written in Spring, John Logan the editor of his remains for what is also attributed to Bruce the Ode to the Cuckoo, Mickle the translator of the Lusiad for his ballad Cumnor Hall, Christopher Smart for his most passionate Song to David, Thomas Warton the historian of English poetry for his sonnets, Joseph Warton his brother for his Ode to Fancy, Miss Susanna Blamire for her lyric The Nabob, and Mrs. Barbauld for her Odes. One noticeable revival was the sonnet. As the period went on it took the place of the ode as the artificial expression of a single mood or phase of thought. We find the Wartons by the last quarter of the century trying it, and in the last decade Mrs. Charlotte Smith the novelist and Rev. William Lisle Bowles. The sonnets of the latter made a deep impression on Coleridge and Lamb and prepared the way for those of Wordsworth and Keats. Though the poet lived till 1850 he published his sonnets as early as 1789. They had been inspired chiefly by those of Shakespeare and Milton; but they expressed the new

nsight into nature and the reaction against the school of Pope. They are on such subjects as Bamborough Castle, Dover Cliffs, The Bells, Ostend, A beautiful landscape, Evening, Influence of time on grief, Music, Bereavement, and are as a rule free from the frigid abstractions of eighteenth century poetry. They are picturesque, melodious, and sometimes passionate. And the thought of them is elevating and idealising. His later poems, odes, ballads, and simple lyrics of nature for children made less stir as they came in the midst of a great poetic age.

**2.** The return to the sonnet, an artificial form that had never commended itself to the Queen Anne age, has the same significance as the cultivation of the Pindaric ode. Neither the old heroic couplet nor the new blank verse or the revived Spenserian stanza supplied any natural ending to a poem ; the writer might go on and generally did go on in them till his readers were tired. The didacticism of the eighteenth century always spread itself out in lengthy works that implied unlimited time and patience on the part of the audience. But the bustle of modern industrial life had already begun and the magazine was rapidly coming into vogue with its brief articles to suit the scraps of leisure that the men of the middle class could afford for reading. Towards the middle of the century therefore there arose a great demand for poetic forms that would confine the poet within limits. The ode had already been used and now became most popular amongst the cultured. The collection of old ballads and songs that began with Percy gave two other brief forms. The sonnet was too unvaried a form to take any life from the personified abstractions of the poetry of the time and had to wait for its new life later in the century when the romantic and sentimental movements had become strong.

## Section 25.

**1.** Along with this demand for brevity in poetry came the search for forms in older literature, a movement that sprang from a different source, a desire to get away from the sordid features of city life and the new industrial life. The strangest product of the two was Thomas Chatterton. They

had already produced in 1765 the sham-antique revisions of the old ballads in the Reliques of English Poetry. The demand for stucco antiquity had brought Macpherson's Ossian into the world in 1760-63 and Horace Walpole's Castle of Otranto in 1764. This singular movement, a symptom of a still deeper change in the spiritual world, awakened the ambition of a boy of eleven or twelve at Colston's charity school, Bristol; and he began to manufacture ancient manuscripts out of parchments his father had brought from the monument room of the church of St. Mary Redcliffe and deposited in the garret of his house. Every Saturday half-holiday, whenever he returned home, the boy Thomas Chatterton spent locked into this upper room. He was little over ten when he had got inserted in Felix Farley's Bristol Journal (January 8th 1763) sixteen lines on Christ coming to judgment, marked by a fine ear for rhythm and a considerable command of melodious language; not a year later he had written his fine devotional poem that has been adopted in most hymnals beginning "Almighty Framer of the sky". He had also taken a great fancy to a black-letter Bible, and had access to the documents of a William Canynge a Bristol merchant of the time of Edward the Fourth. Hence began the manufacture of old poems and prose-writings, that deluded or puzzled antiquaries and literary men for a generation or more, but, had there been any genuine Old English scholarship, should never have imposed on anyone, so little knowledge of the idioms and grammar of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is there shown in the productions, so superficial is the acquaintance with the old words and their uses. His first was a pedigree for a pewterer called Burgum and a poem called The Romaunte of the Cnyghte purporting to be by an ancestor John de Bergham. They brought him confidence and five shillings. There is little poetry in the poem; but the "modernised" version in heroic couplet is marked by considerable vigour of language and imaginative observation of nature. He was encouraged in his much loved pursuit. And when he went as apprentice into the office of one Lambert a solicitor at fifteen he found an old copy of Camden's Britannia and plenty of leisure to fulfil his ambition. He also borrowed a copy of Speght's Chaucer

in black letter and wrote out from its glossary an alphabetical list of the modern English equivalents with the old words opposite them. Most of his obsolete language however he got from Kersey's and Bailey's dictionaries. Thus it was easy for him to manufacture old documents for a history of Bristol which a surgeon called Barrett was writing. He got money and the loan of books for these and spent most of his time in writing the Rowley Poems. He professed that they were copied from the manuscript of a monk of the fifteenth century called Rowley and tried to get Dodsley the publisher to interest himself in them. Then he wrote to Horace Walpole offering a document on the rise of painting in England "Wroten by T. Rowlie 1469 for Mastre Canynge". Walpole did not discourage him at first and he sent other documents and poems; they were submitted to Gray the poet and his friend Mason and pronounced forgeries; the episode closed with an unctuous letter from the author of The Castle of Otranto.

**2.** He was still resolved to get into literature by one way or another. He published the poems in The Town and County Magazine. And getting weary of his office work he left for London and tried to push his way into the society of publishers and literary men. He kept writing prose and poetry for various journals, The Town and Country Magazine, The Court and City Magazine, The Gospel Magazine, The London Museum and The Political Register. He published Saxon poems, imitations of Ossian, as, for example, Cutholf, African Eclogues, a burletta called The Revenge, odes, ballads, songs, and satires. But his feverish struggle was in vain and he committed suicide on August 25th, 1770.

**3.** The Rowley poems were his love-work and are on the whole his best. Stripped of their ridiculous mask of antique spelling and old words they at once appear products of the new romantic school of the eighteenth century as Thomas Warton at the time showed them to be. And yet they are at best only echoes. The Bristowe Tragedy or the Death of Sir Charles Bawdin was evidently inspired by Percy's Reliques; it is in the short ballad stanza, is a simple narrative, and its archaisms are in the ballad style. The

story is commonplace—the execution of a knight by Edward the Fourth — and is spun out into ninety-eight verses, though there is no romance to tell, nothing but the various prayers to stay the hand of vengeance. Another, Aella, is a tragedy, or, as it is called, a tragical interlude. It begins with an epistle to Mastre Canynge, a letter to "the digne Mastre Canynge", and an "Entroductionne". At the close of the first, "Thomas Rowleie" condemns plays on Scriptural subjects; "we do the Godhead wrong". The third is in the "rhyme royal" of Chaucer and the other two in modifications of it. Almost all the dialogue is in Spenserian stanza, a metre utterly unsuited to the drama, and chosen evidently for the archaistic atmosphere that has always hung round it in English. This feature alone might have shown that it could not have been written by a monk of the fifteenth century. But the language is as unrepresentative of its professed age as its metres; there are ten times as many obsolete words in it as in any production even of Chaucer's time. It is a diction "of shreds and patches"; the poet seems to have been "at a feast of learning and stolen the scraps" like Holofernes in Love's Labour's Lost. He has followed even the blunders of Kersey's dictionary; for instance in the first line of the Introduction he brings in the word "cherisaunei" meaning comfort; this was a printer's blunder in the dictionary for "cherisaunce." Kersey, of course, had taken his obsolete words from many centuries without marking their age. The result is that the Rowley language is a coat of many colours, such as never could have been worn in any age or any dialect. An Anglo-Saxon poem is not more difficult and is more living and yet more quaint than a Rowley poem. And Chatterton's knowledge of the meaning of the words he uses is very limited; where it fails him, he ekes it out by imagination and manufacture. Words are used by him in meanings that they never had and in forms that never existed even in the most eccentric scribe's manuscript. He had evidently come across the Faery Queen; for most of the Rowley poems are saturated with Spenserianisms. But he out-Spensers Spenser. The Elizabethan poet could be read by his contemporaries as he can be read by our time without

much difficulty. These poems absolutely demand a constant reference to Kersey's dictionary or to a glossary from it. The Englishmen of no age could have read them without some help. This alone would show how lacking the boy was in that poetic taste which is one of the essentials of the true poet. Not the most didactic or prosaic of the eighteenth century poets would have dabbled in such artificial and unfamiliar colours in order to attain the quaintness of an old production. Had his posthumous critics taken the trouble to understand his language, they would not have so over-praised his work. His precocity and the romance of his life account to some extent for the raptures over it; ignorance of the medium in which it is written accounts for a good deal more. The controversialists just after his death eulogised the Rowley poems into a false antithesis to his other work in order to show that they were genuine and not forgeries. Later critics have kept up the strain.

4. This drama is perhaps the best of them, especially in its minstrel's songs. These prove that he had a true lyric vein worthy of development. That beginning "O sing unto my roundelay" has considerable natural beauty. Two of the best verses are these :—

"Hark! the raven flaps his wings
In the briared dell below;
Hark! the death-owl loud doth sing
To the night-mares as they go."

"See the white moon shines on high;
Whiter is my true love's shroud;
Whiter than the morning sky,
Whiter than the evening cloud."

It is an echo of the ballad scraps that Ophelia sings, and that Percy had patched into his Friar of Orders Grey; and this is confirmed by the fact that the refrain

("My love is dead
Gone to his death-bed")

has the same source and that "A Friar of Orders White" is one of the Rowley poems. The story of Aella is one such as was common in the novels of Chatterton's time. The scene is laid in Anglo-Saxon times; but the sentiment is eighteenth century. Aella is just married to Birtha when

the poem opens. The minstrels sing before them. But news is brought that the Danes have landed again and he must hasten off to repel their incursion, in spite of the pleadings and indignant protests of his young wife. Celmonde who loves her and has designs upon her makes some flowery speeches and goes with him. The Danes are defeated, but Aella is wounded; yet he takes horse and hurries off to his bride. Celmonde has been before him and persuaded her to come to the battlefield to her husband. Deep in a wood he unfolds his love and his black purpose to her and she shrieks. Hurra the Danish leader hears, rescues her by slaying Celmonde and restores her to her husband; but it is too late; in a fit of jealous anger at her disappearance he has stabbed himself; she has only time to see him die; and she dies upon his body. The characters have been much praised; but they were the ordinary types of the romance of Chatterton's day. The Spenserian stanzas are very monotonous and make the passion seem even more absurd than the artificial diction. And where true poetry does shine out, it is generally from the Faery Queen.

5. The same may be said of both his long narrative poems called The Battle of Hastings. The battles and gore repeat themselves as monotonously as the stanza, or as the favourite long-drawn simile of the falling oak or elm or rock; "So have I seen a mouatain oak". Modern sentiments and modern words mingle in the same crude way with the piebald vocabulary. "Before his optics danced a shade of night" is one instance; and Chatterton adds the note "eyes". The English Metamorphosis, an imitation of the second book of the Faery Queen in versifying parts of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and The Tournament are in the same verse and the same style. Goddwyn, a fragment of another drama of the time of Edward the Confessor, is in Spenserian stanza, though the Chorus at the close, a vigorous picture of freedom, is in the long and short ballad verse alternating. His Ballad of Charitie, written not long before his death, is a return to the Chaucerian style and adopts the rhyme royal; it is a very picturesque mediaeval setting of the parable of the good Samaritan. Two of his Eclogues, Robert and Ralph

a dialogue of two soldiers of the Wars of the Roses, and Nigel a lament of a son for his father who has gone with King Richard to Palestine, are Spenserian and in Spenserian stanza; the third, a dialogue between a man and a woman who are about to be married by a priest, Sir Roger, is partly in this and partly in lyrics; the fourth, Elinoure and Juga, the alternating lament of two maidens over their lovers slain in the wars, is in Chaucer's stanza. The story of William Canynge is in a modification of it. The Parliament of Sprites, called "a most merry interlude," is a series of somewhat feeble poems spoken by various ghosts chiefly of old real or imaginary Bristol heroes and chiefly in heroic couplets. The World is a similar series of verses by minstrels who stand each for some abstract quality or allegorical personage. There are also a canto of "The Unknown Knight or the Tournament", a fragment of a dialogue between two cockneys Philpot and Walworth, a fragment of The Merry Tricks of Lamyngtown a Bristol pirate, a Pindaric ode called Song to Aella, and one or two Songs of saints; these are marked neither by any original power nor by any good poetic echoes.

6. Of his acknowledged poems the best are the satires already mentioned and the African Eclogues manifestly imitative of Collins's Persian Eclogues. There is less of story in the eclogues; but they are like their model in adopting heroic couplet, in their love of the poetry of foreign name, and in the attempt to introduce features appropriate to the scene. Narva and Mored is the most poetical; it celebrates the suicide of two lovers who were sworn to celibacy and the priesthood of a god; there are more felicities in it than in most of the Rowley poems, though even these are echoes; one will suffice; a dance is described;

> " Furious they twist around the gloomy trees
> Like leaves in Autumn twirling with the breeze ".

Its similes and grandeur are largely Ossianesque. The death of Nicou is a story of love, war, and vengeance. Heccar and Gaira is in dialogue form and is a setting of a story of the slave trade. These are perhaps the most real and original of all his poems. They were written in London

when the thought of suicide was clouding his mind; two of them end in suicide and all of them have an atmosphere of tragic pathos. His burlettas, The Revenge, a musical burlesque on the amours of Jupiter, Juno, and Bacchus, somewhat coarse, though promising in its lyrics, and The Woman of Spirit, are slight echoes of the musical farces of the day. His Elegies, especially that on Alderman Beckford and that on his old schoolmaster Phillips, are to some extent imitations of Gray's, at least in the melody; but they are stiff and artificial. His lyrics and occasional verses are but attitudinisings; they are not equal to his mock-heroic "February", and his mock elegy on the death of a tabby cat.

7. The promise of all his poems is much greater than the performance. His ambition was as great as his pride and forced him into innumerable experiments in order to catch the ear of the public. There is little that is truly original in him, though Mr. Theodore Watts claims that the deliberate alternation of octosyllabics and anapaestic verse in The Unknown Knight suggested the metre of Coleridge's Christabel and therefore of Scott's poems, and that the Ballad of Charity inspired the Eve of St. Agnes and other poems of Keats. Hence it is that we seldom see any poem of his in any modern selection or any quotation from him in any writer. There are occasional epithets that show him to have had poetic power, as for example, "massy-muscled strength", "hyacinthal star", "self-sprighted fear", "the shadowy cell" of Remembrance, "hart-swift legs", the owl's "eve-speck't wing", "king-cupped meads". But the prosaic spirit of the eighteenth century more frequently moulds his epithets, as for example, "the proto-slain man of the field", "the chorded shell", "painted woe", "the velvet-vested mead". It is the romance of his life that has fixed his name so indelibly on the page of English literature and made us look for far more in his work than we could expect from a boy of seventeen. If only he had been able to control his ambition for fame and his injured pride at the world's coldness till he had gained knowledge of himself and his true powers, and sufficient wisdom to do more than echo what he had read in his omnivorous study of literature!

The chief faculty that is apparent in his work is a marvellous power of imitation, even of the spirit of great, as well as of little poets.

## Section 26.

1. He stands quite alone in the history of English literature, and by this isolation has gained posthumously enough of that which in life he would have died to have. But he is approached if not surpassed in English poetry by another singular character as isolated and as close to madness—William Blake. He was only five years younger than Chatterton and he was as precocious in his poetical ambitions and achievements; yet he lived on into the heart of the succeeding age, till 1827. He is also contrasted with "the marvellous boy that perished in his pride" by the absence of receptivity and imitativeness even in his earliest work. Chatterton's poetry varied with every new fashion of the time, every new ambition of his restless mind, every new poet or age that he studied. The new but rapidly prevailing taste of his generation was for the sham-antique and the part of his work by which he is best known was written to gratify this. Blake had from the very first a note and character of his own; his Poetical Sketches published in 1783 stand apart from the common currents of his time though they unconsciously represent the best of them; and the isolation grew upon him until he lived at last in a world that ordinary men called madness. He had never any overpowering literary influence to struggle against in order to reach his distinctive note, as most poets have. His only marked tendencies are towards Elizabethan models in his simpler and more lyrical poems, and towards Ossianesque expression in his later and prophetic books.

2. Yet he is as true a symptom of the coming time, as important a stage in the evolution of English poetry, as Cowper. In simple themes, and simple, unconventional treatment of themes and diction, he not only anticipates Wordsworth, but transcends him by his revolt against what was artificial and traditional from the Queen Anne age. He is as open and clear in his early work as a child. He is

as religious as Cowper, and represents the primitive devotion and enthusiasm of the new audience. He has the same keen sympathy as that poet with nature and especially with animal life, and recognises the hand of God in every feature of the world. He is as simple in his faith and is as unaffected by the sceptical doubts or deistic rationalism so fashionable with contemporary men of thought and culture. He has the same enthusiasm for freedom and sensitiveness to the revolutionary atmosphere of his day. He hates with the same fervour the tyranny of laws and customs, and the injustices that the conventions of man inflict upon man and beast. And he looks with the same ardent passion, the same Rousseau-like one-sidedness to an ideal intercourse with nature, a primitive Eden stripped of human sophistication and free from the taint of sin. Even his method of poetic art has something akin to Cowper's. Both felt the demand on the part of the new audience for picture. Cowper satisfied this by his satirical portraits of types, by his landscapes especially winter landscapes and his pictures of the interiors of the middle class dwelling and the cottage. Blake gratified it by his pictorial ornamentation and illustration of his verse; it is this that explains the rarity of the picturesque style in his earlier work and its vagueness in his later. He was more inspired by the lyrical and allegorical elements of the Bible and of the literature of the middle classes. He therefore anticipates the passionately lyrical mood of poetry that in the nineteenth century so deeply affected Shelley and Tennyson. The inspiration of a pre-revolutionary age pressed heavily upon him as it did upon so many of the poets of his time; the ideas and emotions of such a period become at times too urgent for any articulate form of expression that it has ready for them; and so madness or approach to madness is singularly common amongst the poets of the latter half of last century, Collins, Cowper, Chatterton, Blake; it is only the sensitive spirits that feel in the aching tissues of their system the prognostics of the coming tempest; and the pressure of the conflicting thoughts and elements dams up the power of clear utterance, disorders the mind, or impels to the anodyne of death. After the Revolution the flood-gates of expression are opened, and every phase of the new ideas

finds issue in passionate melody. Blake never got clear of the obstruction; his power of utterance grew more and more hazy both in picture and in verse till much of it seemed delirium. His later poems and prose writings are metaphysics and allegory gone mad.

3. Born in 1757 he did not print till 1783. He was too poor to publish his Poetical Sketches; but some friends, including Flaxman, had them printed. He continued poor through his whole life; but as he was an engraver and artist he wrote his poems upon plates and etched their illustrations and thus issued his later volumes, his Songs of Innocence in 1787, The Book of Thel in 1789, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell in 1790, The Gates of Paradise (For Children), and Visions of the Daughters of Albion and America, a Prophecy, in 1793, Europe a Prophecy, The Book of Urizen Part I, and Songs of Experience, in 1794, The Song of Los (Africa and Asia, Prophecies), and The Book of Ahania, in 1795, Jerusalem, the Emanation of the Giant Albion, and Milton a poem in Two Books, in 1804, and The Ghost of Abel in 1822. "The French Revolution, a Poem in Seven Books: Book I." he published in 1791; but he never touched it again. He continued to write in the nineteenth century "more than Shakespeare and Milton combined"; but he did not issue these writings. Parts of them have found their way into print through his various biographers and critics. The Poetical Sketches, The Songs of Innocence, and The Songs of Experience are the only portion of his writings that are clear enough to be included in literature; and many pieces in the last are obscure enough to represent all his mystical developments.

4. The Poetical Sketches are said in the Advertisement to have been written between his twelfth and his twentieth year, and show more originality than anything of Chatterton's. The first piece is a dramatic fragment called King Edward the Third depicting the feelings of the English soldiers and leaders before the Battle of Cressy. It is evidently inspired by study of Shakespeare's Henry the Fourth, though it is far from being an echo or imitation

like so many of Chatterton's. Some of the speeches are strong enough and Elizabethan enough to have been written by the best of Shakespeare's fellow-dramatists. The court scene is the least powerful, noteworthy only for the assertion by a Bishop of the superiority of the claims of industry and commerce in England. In the camp scenes some of the sayings of Dagworth, Manny, Chandos, the King, and the Black Prince are quite Shakespearian in their power; they express the sentiments that are so often combined in Cowper's Task, adoration of freedom, patriotism, and sorrow over the woes of war.

> "O Liberty, how glorious art thou!
> I see thee hovering o'er my army, with
> Thy wide-stretched plumes."
> "I see thee blow thy golden trumpet while
> Thy sons shout the strong shout of victory!"
> "I'll fight and weep, 'tis in my country's cause;
> I'll weep and shout for glorious liberty."
> "How terrible then is the field of death,
> Where he doth rend the vault of heaven,
> And shake the gates of hell!"

The minstrel's song that closes the piece is unrhymed and Ossianesque, like so many of his very earliest pieces and his later mystical productions; they might all be printed, as some of them were, in prose, and lose none of their rhythmic effect. The next two pieces are Prologues, one to an unwritten drama of Edward the Fourth and one to King John, both bewailing the devastations of tyranny and war in Ossianic style. The six unrhymed pieces that follow sometimes echo the Song of Solomon, but generally Ossian; they are To Spring, To Summer, to Autumn, to Winter, To the Evening Star, To Morning; they are more picturesque than his later and are full of beautiful imagery. That To Winter is the most vigorous, and that To the Evening Star the most instinct with beauty, containing as it does many lines like these;—

> "Let thy west wind sleep on
> The lake; speak silence with thy glimmering eyes,
> And wash the dusk with silver".

Of the three other unrhymed pieces in the book there are a ghastly ballad of death called Fair Eleanor and a poem called Samson in the style and verse of Milton's Samson

Agonistes. Both show great power and fine imagination. Two stanzas from the former will suffice ;—

" My lord was like a star in highest heaven
Drawn down to earth by spells and wickedness;
My lord was like the opening eyes of Day,
When western winds creep softly o'er the flowers".
" She sat with dead cold limbs, stiffened to stone ;
She took the gory head up in her arms ;
She kissed the pale lips; she had no tears to shed ;
She hugged it to her breast and groaned her last ".

The songs that follow this have caught the true lyrical spirit of the Elizabethan age without approaching to imitation ; a stanza or two will show their quality ;—one of Cupid ;

" He loves to sit and hear me sing,
Then laughing, sports and plays with me ;
Then stretches out his golden wing,
And mocks my loss of liberty ".

Of an irresponsive lover ;—

" His face is fair as heaven,
When springing buds unfold ;
Oh why to him was't given
Whose heart is wintry cold ?
His breast is love's all-worshipped tomb,
Where all love's pilgrims come ".

"Gwin, King of Norway" is a ballad fierce with revolt against tyranny and with hatred of war ; it is simple and vigorous as any of the border ballads ;

" The God of war is drunk with blood,
The earth doth faint and fail ;
The stench of blood makes sick the heavens,
Ghosts glut the throat of hell ".

This verse shows how his age has led him quite away from the delight in bloodshed so often apparent in his models. Against it is to be set an unrhymed lyric called "A War Song, To Englishmen", although it is clearly to be taken as merely dramatic. "An imitation of Spenser" is as unlike Spenser as a poem well could be ; it is full of Blake and his age, and yet deals more in personified abstractions than any other of his poems. "Blind-man's Buff" is an attempt to be humorously descriptive in the style of Gay.

5. In the twenty brief lyrics of the Songs of Innocence we have a complete anticipation of the style and themes of

Wordsworth, with more evidence of a fine lyric ear. They flow with all the spontaneity ascribed to them in the Introduction ;—

"Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee ;
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me ;
'Pipe a song about a lamb !'
So I piped with merry cheer ;
Piper, pipe that song again ;
So I piped ; he wept to hear."
"And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs,
Every child may joy to hear."

They are all in the same simple diction and marked by the same simple childlike spirit. The new enthusiasm of worship, and the sense of the brotherhood of man and of the kinship of all nature are through them all. The Little Black Boy expresses the idealism that afterwards developed into mysticism, and held material things but a dream, and spirit the true reality ;

"And we are put on earth a little space
That we may learn to bear the beams of love ;
And these black bodies and their sunburnt face
Are but a cloud and like a shady grove.
For when our souls have learned the heat to bear,
The cloud will vanish, we shall hear his voice".

The Lamb, A Cradle Song, The Divine Image, On Another's Sorrow express the same idealist religion, the same sense of the omnipresence of a loving God ;

"Think not thou canst sigh a sigh,
And thy Maker is not by ;
Think not thou canst weep a tear,
And thy Maker is not near".
"Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell,
There God is dwelling too".

The Echoing Green, The Chimney-sweeper, and The Laughing Song are tinged with simple humour and cheerfulness.

6. Over the Songs of Experience (1794) the shadow of his mysticism falls. He has begun to see visions and dream dreams, and the meaning of them he makes no effort to render clear. In his poetical Introduction he does not

speak or think with the simplicity of that to his first book of Songs; now it is the prophet and seer who sings;

> "Hear the voice of the Bard
> Who present, past, and future sees;
> Whose ears have heard
> The Holy Word,
> That walked among the ancient trees".

The voice calls "the lapsed soul", the Earth, to return;

> "The starry floor, the watery shore
> Are given thee till the break of day".

"Earth's Answer" follows. It is out of "darkness, dread, and drear", "her locks covered with grey despair"; she accuses "the father of the ancient men" of jealousy and cruelty to her, of binding "free love with bondage". A number of the songs have the same themes and metre as The Songs of Innocence; but they are dim allegories and not spontaneous outbursts of a child-like nature. In The Clod and The Pebble, the clod "trodden with the cattle's feet" sings of love's unselfishness building "a hell in heaven's despair", the inference being that those that suffer and are lowly feel most the beauty of love and love most unselfishly. Holy Thursday is a lament over the woes of children born in poverty; it is filled with the new revolutionism;

> "For where'er the sun does shine,
> And where'er the rain does fall,
> Babes should never hunger there,
> Nor poverty the mind appal".

The Little Girl Lost and The Little Girl Found paint the universal brotherhood of innocence, the lion watching over and protecting the little child. The Chimney-sweeper is an attack on the pharisaism that worships God and yet neglects and oppresses His little ones;—

> "And because I am happy and dance and sing,
> They think they have done me no injury,
> And are gone to praise God, and his priest and king,
> Who make up a heaven of our misery".

This is the cry of the little child against his parents who have "clothed him in the clothes of death". The Fly is an allegory of the fate of human life;

> "For I dance and drink and sing,
> Till some blind hand shall brush my wing".

The Tiger is a question as to the purpose of the creation of such ravening power and beauty;

> "When the stars threw down their spears,
> And watered heaven with their tears,
> Did he smile his work to see?
> Did he who made the lamb make thee?"

The Little Vagabond is a suggestion that the combination of the alehouse and the church might make the poor religious. "London" is a lament over the sins and sorrows of the great city. The Human Abstract is an obscure allegory of the evil that grows "in the human Brain". Christian Forbearance, and A Little Boy Lost are as mystical; but seem to be attacks on the intolerant spirit of Christian churches. A Little Girl Lost seems to allegorise the terrorising effect of the common idea of God, as against the beauty of love. A Divine Image is another attack on the harsh ideas of most religions;

> "The human dress is forgéd iron,
> The human form a fiery forge,
> The human face a furnace sealed,
> The human heart its hungry gorge".

A Cradle Song has not the simple faith of its prototype; it ends in a pessimistic cry;

> "Oh the cunning wiles that creep
> In thy little heart asleep!
> When the little heart doth wake,
> Then the dreadful light shall break".

The School-boy is an appeal for less school and more intercourse with nature for children. To Tirzah is an indignant cry of a child against the "mother of its mortal part" imprisoning his soul "in senseless clay" and "betraying" it to "mortal life".

> "The death of Jesus set me free,
> Then what have I to do with thee?"

7. The book of Thel which had already been published (1789) is the least obscure of all his mystical writings, though it is, like the rest, in Ossianesque rhythm and language, and has its meaning hidden in only half-transparent allegory. It seems to be an expression of that extreme idealism which grew upon him and many of his age, like Shelley, and which bewails the mixed nature of man,

and his imprisonment in flesh, leading as this does to the woes to be seen in human life. Thel is the youngest of the daughters of the Seraphim and laments the destiny of her loveliness; she must pass away "like a smile upon an infant's face". The lily of the valley chides her for her complaint, and says "I love to dwell in lowly vales", "Yet I am visited from heaven", and shall "flourish in eternal vales". The little cloud that fades away in an hour rejoices in its immortality; it fades "to ten-fold life, to love, to peace and raptures holy". Thel still mourns that she "only lives to be at death the food of worms". And the cloud bids her rejoice;

> "If thou art the food of worms, O virgin of the skies,
> How great thy use, how great thy blessing!
> Everything that lives
> Lives not alone nor for itself".

The worm is called; but the clod of clay answers for him, "bowing over the weeping infant", and "her life exhaling in milky fondness". "We live not for ourselves";

> "My bosom of itself is cold and of itself is dark;
> But he that loves the lowly pours his oil upon my head,
> And kisses me".
> "But how this is I know not and I cannot know";
> "I live and love".

The "matron clay" bids Thel enter her house and fear nothing;

> "Thel entered in and saw the secrets of the land unknown;
> She saw the couches of the dead and where the fibrous root
> Of every heart on earth infixes deep its restless twists;
> A land of sorrows and of tears where never smile was seen".

She came to her own "grave-plot", and heard a voice asking the various questions that trouble the thoughtful man, why evil exists, and why the soul is wrapped with "a little curtain of flesh". Thel flees shrieking and the poem ends.

8. The strength of the new transcendentalism that was to master English imaginative literature was never more apparent than in Blake and his poetry. All matter is to him a latent energy preparing a life beyond life. Only in man, the meeting-point of the ethereal and the fleshly, does it come into hostile relations with the higher element, spirit. Divinity is everywhere, inspiring, guarding all that is, even

the lowliest; thus he anticipates the pantheism of Wordsworth and of the nature-school of idealists. But divinity exists most in the soul of man which has pre-natal existence; thus he gives the fundamental thought of the Ode on the Intimations of Immortality long before it was conceived by the Lake poet. The soul is the true man, and to it all the earthly, fleshly elements should yield their service; and it is the breach of this duty of the universe that leads to the woes so apparent in human life from birth to death. It is earthliness that has given us tyrannies and cruelties, universal oppression and war. It is materialism that has engendered gross thought and life and all the curse that lies upon mankind. He almost hates Bacon and Locke and Newton for teaching it as a philosophy and resting all knowledge on the senses. They are to him "the three great teachers of atheism or Satan's doctrine". Nothing is to be gained by trusting to the senses but everlasting doubt, the foe of that inner intuition, that power of vision and of seeing the ethereal, which comes from God and belongs to the divine in man. He could himself see, and he painted, the spirits of the dead, even of dead animals. He was of "imagination all compact", and it was only this "muddy vesture of decay" that marred the vision in most men. He came almost to live in the sphere of spirit and imagination, and hence perhaps his later inability to embody his ideas for the ordinary intelligence of men. His art, equally with his literary expression, became more and more ethereal and obscure. A dozen different interpretations might be attached to any one of his later pictures and to any one of his later poems. In fact he came to hate all sensuous expression. Rubens and Correggio with their fleshly and effeminate forms and colours were an abhorrence to him. It was Raphael and Michael Angelo that were to him the divine painters; they saw the spirit, as he saw it, shining through its earthly vesture.

9. His horror of the sensuous grows in his poems. Only the immortal essence of matter makes him endure it. Through all nature breathes the divine spirit. Animal life is sacred to him as to Cowper and Burns, as being from the hand of the Divine. And only this materiality of man, the

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internecine war of his nature, makes him pursue and kill animals, or see war amongst them. Still more keenly does he feel the brotherhood of man that should exist over all the world but for this clogging evil. In him this became a passion, and he fell into the paradoxical habit of hating those men who would not forgive. He had his own share of quarrels and lifelong feuds; yet he never ceased to preach this duty of universal forgiveness, as the essence of true religion, and the future purifier of human life. In his introduction to The Gates of Paradise (1793) he expresses it most clearly;

> "Mutual forgiveness of each vice,
> Such are the gates of Paradise".
> "Jehovah's fingers wrote the Law;
> He wept; then rose in zeal and awe,
> And in the midst of Sinai's heat,
> Hid it beneath his Mercy-seat.
> O Christians! Christians! tell me why
> You rear it on your altars high".

This explains his continued objection to the Christian church along with his lifelong adoration of its Founder; it explains the absence of this "God-intoxicated man" from all churches during half a century. He believed that the essence of all true religion, of Christ's religion, was love, forgiveness of all sins, and not terror and vengeance and punishment. Godwin's Political Justice states in cold formulae what he wrote in fiery words in his poetry, and believed and practised as far as the existing conditions of life would allow him. He joined with the most advanced revolutionists in their meetings, and sympathised with their republican doctrines and sanguine hopes from the great French upheaval; nay he wore the red cap of the French Revolution openly, and gave Tom Paine the hint that saved him from arrest for publishing The Rights of Man. But he abhorred their religious opinions. He was with them in their belief in the brotherhood of man; but he would have nothing to do with their atheism or even deism; he believed still more in Christ, in the brotherhood of spirit, in the divinity of man. Reason he distrusted, and he curses it in many of his obscure and his prophetic poems. It was inspiration, the inner sight, the divine intuition in man, that was the only trustworthy guide. And

this had vanished from all the churches; hence they were representatives of unforgiveness, of vengeance, of the great avenger and hater, Satan. Thus he was the forerunner of Shelley, who in his Prometheus Unbound, the most comprehensive of all his poems, takes up all these positions, which this seer of visions has somewhat dimly and somewhat inconsistently expressed in his poems. He was, in every respect, both in poetic idea and in poetic expression, the most significant figure of the eighteenth century in the development of modern English poetry. He did not act so much as a cause in its progress; he was a complete forecast of all it was to be for nearly a century, with its revolutionism, its transcendentalism, its socialistic tendencies, its passionate sympathy with the oppressed, its tolerance of all phases of humanity, its adoration of the spirit of love—the true spirit of Christianity—its hatred of all pharisaism and cant and sensuousness, its love of melody and simplicity of expression, its lyricism. He was a forecast even of its faults; some of his poems have the spirit, method, and music of Browning's obscurest in them, and parts of them might be quoted without detection as the oracular and mystic verses of Emerson.

## Section 27.

1. The young men, who were in the nineteenth century to make this new spirit born of revolutionism take deep root in English poetry, were already fired by literary ambition, when Blake was uttering his dark sayings in verse over the coming time. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and Landor were respectively twenty, eighteen, sixteen and fifteen when the French Revolution blazed out on the horizon of Europe. And their sensitive poetic natures at once responded to the magnetism of hope in a new era that tingled through the West. They became republicans, and even sympathised with socialistic dreams. And though three of them were gradually disillusioned before the century closed, they never lost the impulse that the Revolution gave them. For the movement was deeper than mere political opinions; it had, as has been shown from previous poetry, its literary source far back in the century,

and it had grown in passion and force and breadth as the age proceeded; it was not confined to France and could not have its issue merely in French politics or the reactionary politics of England; it had its currents flowing through the hearts of the new audience of literature out of fountains that had been once national, and then sectarian in the Civil War, and were soon to grow national again.

**2.** Wordsworth as the older was the first to feel it as an intellectual influence and to embody it in his poetry. At first the outburst in France seemed the most natural thing in the world to him. He had grown up amidst the middle class tradition of democratic freedom, the ideal that the Puritans and their allies had fought for in the century before; and during his life at Cambridge his more self-complacent disposition failed to discover anything but freedom and democratic organization in society. To unbind the galling fetters that the court and aristocracy of France had welded round her people seemed to him nothing but the prompting of nature. In his third long vacation he and another undergraduate made a walking tour on the Continent, and he saw without concern the symptoms and the first phases of the great event. When he had taken his degree in 1791, he spent six months in London and then passed over to France, where he remained nearly a year. He lived chiefly at Orleans and Blois and coming across one of the republican generals began to feel the uncommon nature of all that was occurring in the country and to understand the enthusiasm of revolution. The September massacres did not disillusion him; the following month he went to Paris and was about to join the Girondist party, when the stoppage of his allowance compelled him to return. He had not lost the patriotism that even in the most advanced section of the English middle class accompanied the worship of freedom; and when war broke out between England and the new republic in 1793 he felt cut to the heart as at the enmity of two dear friends. He clung to his ideal of reason and its embodiment in freedom in spite of this and of the atrocities that soiled the cause in France. Yet was he downcast, and he began to feel the disruption of his beliefs.

3. But already had he touched the consolation of his soul, already had he discovered his poetic power and the peace that comes from the religion of nature. Even at school he had shown how easily verse came to him and how naturally it accompanied insight into the beauty of nature. He gives in his collected works a few lines from "the conclusion of a poem composed in anticipation of leaving school", and a sonnet "written in very early youth"; and both reveal his sense of the responsive soul of the world around him. The latter is the description of a calm evening and contains these lines;

> "A slumber seems to steal
> O'er vale and mountain and the starless sky.
> Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,
> Home-felt and home-created, comes to heal
> That grief for which the senses still supply
> Fresh food; for only then, when memory
> Is hushed, am I at rest".

And early in 1793, before this sadness had come over him from failing hope in the new era, he had published a volume containing two poems, An Evening Walk, and Descriptive Sketches. They are in the heroic couplet and even though, as they stand in his works, they are largely altered from their original form, they contain the clearest traces of their inspiration by Goldsmith and Thomson. The Evening Walk, "addressed to a young lady", is much the more interesting; it shows almost fully developed the worship of nature that made his name a watchword afterwards, though written, according to his own dating, between 1787 and 1789, that is, during his first two years at college. He pictures with the most loving hand the features of the scenery and life of his native Cumberland hills and lakes; and there are phrases and passages that reveal a keenness of observation new to English poetry; "the huddling rill"; "echo dallies with its various din"; a cloud over the setting sun "breaks the spreading of its golden tides";

> "The solemn evening shadows sail
> On slowly-waving pinions down the vale";
> "Now, with religious awe, the farewell light
> Blends with the solemn colouring of night";
> "Like Una shining on her gloomy way,
> The half-seen form of twilight roams astray";
> "The rising moon",

"With a hoary light she frosts the ground";
"darkness broods
O'er all its vanished dells, and lawns, and woods";
"The brook brawls along the public road,
Dark with bat-haunted ashes stretching broad";
"Unheeded night has overcome the vales:
On the dark earth the wearied vision fails:
The latest lingerer of the forest train
The lone black fir, forsakes the faded plain:
Last evening sight, the cottage smoke, no more,
Lost in the thickened darkness, glimmers hoar;
And towering from the sullen dark-brown mere,
Like a black wall, the mountain steeps appear.
Now o'er the soothed accordant heart we feel
A sympathetic twilight slowly steal".
"The song of mountain-streams, unheard by day,
Now hardly heard, beguiles my homeward way.
Air listens, like the sleeping water, still,
To catch the spiritual music of the hill,
Broke only by the slow clock tolling deep,
Or shout that wakes the ferryman from sleep".

In spite of the heroic couplet and the echo it brings of Queen Anne days, this has all the Wordsworthian flavour of the new time. His sister afterwards complained that "moveless" and "viewless" occurred too often and became a mannerism; this fault has evidently been polished away, though mannerisms still remain; everything "twinkles", the aspen, the stars, the waters, and even the tails of deer; and "swain" occurs oftener than it would out of reach of the eighteenth century. But we have a living sympathy with every aspect of the lakes and mountains, and often with the human dwellers amongst them, the shepherd, the boatman, the peasant with his superstitions, the smith, the quarryman; and there is one most pathetic picture of a beggar-woman and her children dying of cold. He enters too, into the pleasures and pains of animal life, the cattle, the deer, the swans, the song-birds. And he prophesies a simple cottage life for himself where he and his friend

"to happy days shall rise,
Till our small share of hardly-paining sighs,
(For sighs will ever trouble human breath)
Creep hushed into the tranquil breast of death".

The other poem addressed to his travelling companion, the Rev. Robert Jones, is much less penetrative in its sympathy with nature and less Wordsworthian. Though it is a record

of their tour across France, up Lake Como, over the Alps, into the Grisons, through the Tell country and Chamounix, it is manifestly modelled on Goldsmith's Traveller and has many echoes of that poem. It is twice the length of his earlier, and is marked as finished in 1792; but it has far fewer insights and felicities. The sympathy he had with the scenery of his native district fails him somewhat among the more sublime sights of Switzerland and the Alps. Yet there are notable passages, the description of the peace of the Grande Chartreuse broken by the clang of arms, of the old violin-player by Como, of the life and freedom of the Swiss, of the chamois-hunter, of the gathering to arms as he returns through France. The poem is so saturated with the new revolutionism that it might be called a panegyric of freedom; he lingers in admiration over the spirit of the Swiss, in sadness over the thraldom in which the Savoyards were held, in sympathy over the rising of the French to defend their new republican freedom against the tyrant allies; he apostrophises freedom in the manner so popular amongst the poets of the latter half of the century, and appeals to heaven to give aid to the "just cause", and

> "preside
> Over the mighty stream now spreading wide".

He speaks of the Revolution as "a great and glorious birth", "as if a new-made heaven were hailing a new earth". In one passage he adopts Rousseau's teaching, shows how man was in primeval times "blest as free, for he was nature's child"; he "all superior but his God disdained", had "simple dignity" without debasement, "the eye sublime and surly lion-grace". It is because the Swiss is so primitive that he is so free; he worships on his battle-fields of freedom;

> "For images of other worlds are there,
> Awful the light and holy is the air".

He holds communion with God,

> "There where the peal of swelling torrents fills
> The sky-roofed temple of the eternal hills".

He hears the avalanche;

> "Mock the dull ear
> Of Time with deaf abortive sound",

and sees

> " A planet's pomp and steady light
> In the least star of scarce-appearing night ".

4. The volume attracted the attention of few, even though it had almost all the qualities that belong to the Wordsworthian revolution in English poetry. He sojourned in London for a time, uncertain what to do, but still writing poetry. He passed a month in the Isle of Wight and saw the fleet preparing to set out against the French. He "left the place with melancholy forebodings"; he remembered the American War and he knew that this would be a longer struggle and would bring only "distress and misery". He spent two days on Salisbury Plain. And the product of this sadness and this visit was a new departure in verse, his Spenserian effort called Guilt and Sorrow, finished by the end of 1794, but only partially published in 1798. It consists of seventy-four Spenserian stanzas, and tells in the plain photographic manner of so many of his brief narratives the story of a marine and a soldier's widow, who meet on Salisbury Plain. It is full of the miseries and sorrows that came from the war and the pressgang, and is in parts sensational and in parts pathetic. Yet its diction is marred by learned elements unsuited to the speech of peasants.

5. About the time of completing this poem, a friend, Raisley Calvert, who had admired his work, died and left him £900 as a legacy. On this he and his sister retired into Dorsetshire and lived for a time in a cottage at Racedown. Here he came across Coleridge, who had been one of the few to see the merit of his first volume; and in July 1797 they removed to Alfoxden in Somersetshire in order to be near their new friend who was living at Netherstowey. It was during these two years that the reaction against the Queen Anne conventionality and against the separation of poetic diction from common speech set in and established itself as a creed in his mind. Here he wrote a tragedy called The Borderers which he did not publish till 1842; he had attempted in vain to get it acted. It was another Elizabethan echo but full of the life of his own time. There are in it many passages of great power that show the most careful study of Shakespeare; and

it grows in interest and in pregnant speech as it proceeds. The scene is laid on the Borders of Scotland and in the time of Henry the Third. The story and characters have a strong analogy to Othello. Oswald is the Iago, the motiveless incarnation of evil, who leads on the noble Marmaduke, the young chief of a band of free-booters, to a crime he loathes, and then glories in the deed; Marmaduke is made jealous of Idonea whom he loves and is drawn into the resolve to kill her blind father by the histrionic speeches of the villain and his accomplice a beggar-woman whom he compels to slander the old man; the haunting image and echo of his love in the face and voice of the victim make him abandon his purpose; he leaves him to die on a heath; and he has to tell his criminal intent to Idonea who still loves him; Oswald is slain by the band, a triumphant fiend; Marmaduke condemns himself to everlasting exile and wandering. There are very many passages like these ;—

> "Hush! 'tis the feeble and earth-loving wind,
> That creeps along the bells of the crisp heather".

This is from the blind man abandoned on the moor. Another passage afterwards used in the Dedication of the White Doe of Rylstone is as follows :—

> "Action is transitory—a step, a blow
> The motion of a muscle—this way or that—
> 'Tis done, and in the after-vacancy
> We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed;
> Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
> And shares the nature of infinity".
> "Three sleepless nights I passed in sounding on,
> Through words and things, a dim and perilous way".
> "We are praised only as men in us
> Do recognise some image of themselves,
> An abject counterpart of what they are,
> Or the empty thing that they would wish to be.
> "Merit has no surer test
> Than obloquy."

The play is far more dramatic and powerful than Tennyson's Foresters; but it failed. And he set aside the experiment.

**6.** Out of his intercourse with Coleridge came his final decision in poetry. They started out one afternoon in the autumn of 1797 on a short tour; and they determined to pay the expenses by writing a poem together and sending it

to The New Monthly Magazine. As they walked they struck on the idea of imitating the ballads. It was not new in English poetry; in fact ever since the publication of Percy's Reliques the truer poets had been more and more receding upon simple ballad language and manner; Blake had been the last experimenter. Coleridge brought up as a theme the dream of a friend. Wordsworth suggested that the old sailor of the dream should commit some crime that should occasion "the spectral persecution", and, having been reading of albatrosses in Shelvocke's Voyages, that the crime should be the killing of one of these birds; he also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men. They began The Ancient Mariner together; but their methods were so different that Coleridge was left to write it, only a few lines being contributed by his partner. The ballad became too long for a magazine; and they resolved to write a volume of poems chiefly on supernatural subjects, taken from common life, but looked at through an imaginative medium. Such is, according to Wordsworth, the genesis of the famous Lyrical Ballads published by Cottle at Bristol in the autumn of 1798. The ballad metres were largely adopted and the lyrical form; and the simplest of language was used, chiefly the language of daily life.

7. Wordsworth wrote the bulk of the volume; and all his contributions are representative of his various methods. He runs his theory of plain diction and theme to death in The Thorn, Goody Blake, The Idiot Boy, and Simon Lee; and he rises to his noblest with the new metre which he had learned from his dramatic experiment in Lines written above Tintern Abbey. The first four well represent dozens of pieces of bathos that he wrote from this time onwards. They tell what was not worth the trouble of telling to any but a friend or neighbour and then only in an idle mood and in half-a-dozen words to raise his practical sympathy. "The Idiot Boy" is the story of one Betty Foy who sends off her witless son on a pony to bring the doctor to a sick neighbour Susan Gale; he does not return and she has to seek him through the night and finds him by a waterfall. "Simon Lee" describes a poor old huntsman who is too weak to unearth a stump and is helped by the poet.

"Goody Blake" tells how Harry Gill never gets warm because he has been cursed by Goody Blake a poor old woman for making her give up the firewood she had taken from his hedge. "The Thorn" narrates the story of a girl who, deceived by her lover, has gone mad, and sits all day by a withered thorn crying "Oh misery", because is it supposed, she has killed and buried her infant there. To put these incidents into long poems would be bad enough; the ballad-makers might probably have sung half-a-dozen lyrical verses about the last; but to spend two or three dozen stanzas of the most desultory type on them was to invite parody, was indeed to write parody. And he manages to tell the stories like a garrulous old man without point and almost without the natural pathos that briefly told they might have had. The ballads often dealt with lowly life, but it was with the tragic or romantic incidents of it; their phrases were those of the people and so were their methods; but a fine artistic instinct made selection amongst them. To inflict tedious and desultory everyday talk of peasants on a reading public was offence enough; but to labour it into the appearance of poetry was to produce bathos and excite laughter. Had Wordsworth only read Blake's Songs of Innocence, he would have seen what could be made of lowly themes and simple language by means of selection and brevity. He felt the demand of the new audience for simplicity and he took it to mean commonness if not commonplaceness.

8. Two other pieces, Expostulation and Reply, and The Tables Turned, that versify a conversation, are saved from bathos partly by their brevity, but chiefly by a new and noble thought put into fine verse.

> "One impulse from a vernal wood
> May teach you more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good
> Than all the sages can."

The Lines Written above Tintern Abbey would have redeemed any volume from commonplace by their noble statement of the new poetic creed. They are instinct with the beauty of Nature that has a spirit in it. They give in rapturous but philosophic blank verse all the articles of trancendentalism. They contrast the thoughtless enjoyment

of nature by his boyhood with the tranquil worship with which he now enters into its meaning. The remembrance of "these beauteous forms" has given him "in hours of weariness, sensations sweet", and feelings that mould

> "That best portion of a good man's life,
> His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
> Of kindness and of love".

It has lightened

> "The weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world",

and brought the serene mood, in which

> "We are laid asleep
> In body and become a living soul",

and "see into the life of things". Often, when "the fever of the world"

> "Has hung upon the beatings of his heart",

has he turned back in spirit to the "sylvan Wye". And, as he stands by its banks again, he feels that

> "In this moment there is life and food
> For future years."

Nature in his boyhood "to him was all in all"; "the sounding cataract haunted him like a passion". That "dizzy rapture" is past; and he has learned to hear in nature "the still, sad music of humanity", to feel

> "A presence that disturbs him with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts";
> "a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man".

Therefore is he still a lover "of all the mighty world of eye and ear", "both what they half-create and what perceive", pleased to recognise in nature "the soul of all his moral being". In the joy of his sister, yet a girl, he sees his former rapture, and he prays that it may continue yet a while with her,

> "Knowing that nature never did betray
> The heart that loved her".

Nature tranquilises and elevates the mind so that

> " neither evil tongues,
> Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
> Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
> The dreary intercourse of daily life,
> Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
> Our cheerful faith that all which we behold
> Is full of blessings ".

In after years her memory shall thus

> " Be as a dwelling-place
> For all sweet sounds and harmonies ".

She will remember if they are separated that he, " so long a worshipper of nature ", came hither " unwearied in her service ", nay, " with far deeper zeal of holier love ".

9. This is the spirit that made Wordsworth's poetry a new revelation to the nineteenth century, that gave form and expression to the growing sense of the beauty of the world, of the soul that informs it, and of the purifying influence of intercourse with it. At last the true pastoralism had been reached, that after which men, weary of the bustle of cities and the artificiality and vice of civilization, had been for centuries yearning. In this simple and worshipful dwelling with nature was to be found the anodyne for spirits weary of so much factitious life, the anodyne so long sought for in the half-pretence of pastorals. In this prayerful mood of intercourse with the divine element, that made the heart of nature, was the true nirvana, the true annihilation of the fretful, carking self.

10. The same spirit is more briefly, but as religiously, expressed in a brief extract " from an unpublished poem ", printed in Coleridge's journal, " The Friend ", and called " Influence of Natural Objects in calling forth and strengthening the imagination in boyhood and early youth ". This passage was written in 1799, and is part of The Prelude, his poetical and psychological autobiography, already begun, but not published till 1805. He apostrophises "the soul that is the eternity of thought ", that drew him from " the mean and vulgar works of man ", and purified " the elements of feeling and of thought ", until he recognised " a grandeur in the beatings of the

heart". Then he passes into a description of the rapture of fellowship with nature "in November days", when

> "All shod with steel,
> We hissed along the polished ice",

and "the shadowy banks" "came sweeping through the darkness" and

> "With the din
> Smitten the precipices rang aloud".

**11.** There is less of the spiritual insight in a fragment he wrote at Goslar in Germany in the winter of 1799, "Nutting"; but there is a deep sense of the mind, the personality, that is in nature. He describes a boyish excursion to a hazel-grove for nuts; he lay for a while, his cheek on a mossy stone, drinking in the scene, hearing the "fairy water-breaks" murmur on, and "breathing with such suppression of the heart as joy delights in"; then he set to his task; but as he left, unless he confounds "present feelings with the past", he felt as if he had polluted a shrine,

> "a sense of pain when he beheld
> The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky";

"there is a spirit in the woods". Here the long-petrified poetry of nature by means of personification has given way to life and passionate love. Another fragment of the same period called "The Simplon Pass" shows the same almost pantheistic recognition of the divinity in nature, but far more intellectually.

**12.** "A Poet's Epitaph", also belonging to 1799, is, though not in blank verse, but in his somewhat prosaic use of the ballad metre, full of his new creed. It is a defence of his poetic life that would seem so idle to the practical man. He warns off from the poet's grave the various types of men to be met in the busy world; the statist is first to "love one living man" before he thinks of the dead; the lawyer, the doctor, the soldier must lay their profession with its evil effects aside before they approach; he has an especial horror of the scientist, or philosopher, as he calls him, "one all eyes", "a fingering slave";

> "One that would peep and botanise
> Upon his mother's grave";

he bids him, "wrapt in sensual fleece", take his "ever-dwindling soul" away and let the poet "rest in peace"; so does he abhor "the moralist", "an intellectual all-in-all", "a reasoning self-sufficing thing", "himself his world and his own God";

> "Sleep in thy intellectual crust;
> Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch
> Near this unprofitable dust".

Far different is the poet-mourner "clad in homely russet", "an idler in the land";

> "He murmurs near the running brooks
> A music sweeter than their own";

he is a solitary, and in solitude he has had "impulses of deeper birth", and reaped "the harvest of a quiet eye";

> "You must love him ere to you
> He will seem worthy of your love".

Two others in the ballad metre, written in 1798, Lines in Early Spring, and To My Sister express two different phases of his higher pantheism, his belief in the soul that lives and moves in nature; in the former he mourns over the thought of "what man has made of man", when he considers his "human soul" is "linked" by nature "to her fair works"; it is his faith "that every flower enjoys the air it breathes"; in the latter he bids his sister come forth, and enjoy in idleness the "blessing in the air", that seems to give "a sense of joy" "to the bare trees and mountains bare"; it is the first of March and is the true beginning of the year;

> "Love, now a universal birth,
> From heart to heart is stealing,
> From earth to man, from man to earth:
> It is the hour of feeling.
> One moment now may give us more
> Than years of toiling reason".

13. Other poems of these last few years of the century express "the still sad music of humanity", and the pathos of lowly human life, rather than the spirit that dwells in nature; and yet even in them the two seem to combine. "The old Cumberland Beggar" tells in his peculiarly musical and varied blank verse of the charity that is twice-blest; he upholds the superiority of the old system of personal relation of beggar and helper to the new workhouse

system; he asserts that there is "a spirit and pulse of good" "to every mode of being inseparably linked"; and he shows how this blind old man keeps alive in the district the love of benevolence, the joy of doing good, the sense of "kindred with a world where want and sorrow are". But he prefers to put this sympathy with human sorrow, this pathos of the lowliest human life into rhymed and generally ballad stanzas; "Her eyes are wild" (1798) is the lament of a forsaken wife over her babe; Ruth (1799) the story of a forsaken bride who, a child of nature, lives to old age out in the open; The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman (1798) puts into pathetic verse the cry of one who has been left by her tribe in the forest and is about to die; all three have the simple pathos of nature and of human injustice in them. The Danish Boy (1799), the picture of a "spirit of noonday" that haunts a lovely dell, gives the brighter side of rustic superstition. "We are seven" (1798), To a Sexton, Matthew, and The Two April Mornings, all written in 1799, express the living kinship with the dead in the churchyard that rustics feel. Lucy Gray (1799), in telling the story of a child lost in the snow, embodies the same sentiment, but goes further; it ends with the rustic belief, that Lucy "is a living child" and wanders singing over the heath where she died. The same pathos of kinship with the dead he several times puts into melodious verse about another dead Lucy; "Three years she grew in sun and shower" is the longest; nature counts the child as hers, and resolves to take her;

> "The stars of midnight shall be dear
> To her; and she shall lean her ear
> In many a secret place,
> Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
> And beauty born of murmuring sound
> Shall pass into her face."

"A slumber did my spirit steal", "I travelled among unknown men", "Strange fits of passion have I known", and "She dwelt among the untrodden ways", all written in 1799, are brief dirges over this child Lucy; the last is the most beautiful;

> "A violet by a mossy stone,
> Half hidden from the eye!
> Fair as a star, when only one
> Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!"

But his didacticism and his reaction against grandiose and conventional language led him too often into the commonplace when using the ballad form and stanza. In The Last of the Flock (1798), a story of struggle with growing poverty, and The Reverie of Poor Susan, a dream in London of a youth passed among the scenes of nature, the pathos almost overcomes the tendency to bathos. In the Anecdote for Fathers (1798), and The Fountain A Conversation (1799), the higher element that idealises common life succumbs to the commonplace. Most of those poems dated 1799 were written at Goslar in Germany during a severe winter; and into one or two of them there enters a longing for England as his home. He returned and finally settled at Grasmere in his beloved Lake district.

14. The first edition of the Lyrical Ballads was met with a storm of criticism and jeering; and when in 1800 he republished them with most of the poems already noticed added in a second volume, he began a prose defence of his poetic attitude in his famous Essay on Poetry. This, as the manifesto of the new poets and the creed of the coming literature, is epoch-making, and naturally forms the boundary-line between the period of preparation and the period of fulfilment, the eighteenth century and the nineteenth. Round it surged a sea of controversy for many years; but its teaching was destined to win; for it gathered up all that the best poets of the close of last century were striving after or were impelled by their new audience and atmosphere towards. He seems to feel that he is standing alone as the pioneer of poetic truth to nature, the first poet to protest against the artificialities that had separated eighteenth century poetry from reality. He is quite unconscious of the fact that he is only part of a movement, and by no means the leader of it; there is scarcely a poet of any note of the last quarter of last century, nay of the latter half of it, but reveals some anticipation of the new poetry. And Cowper, one of whose poems, his ballad of Alexander Selkirk, he

criticises and discounts as untrue in language, approached very close to The Excursion in his Task; it was only the satiric element and his coming before the Revolution that kept him from occupying the same position in poetic evolution as Wordsworth. Still more does Blake fulfil all the conditions that Wordsworth contends for as his own; he goes to lowly life and nature; he takes the simplest language of the people; he elevates the theme by giving it spiritual meaning; he is idealistic to mysticism like Wordsworth himself; he sees God in all things; he feels the human kinship of the universe around; he is pre-eminently a teacher; in short he anticipates in every respect the idea of a poet as given in the Essay. Wordsworth, indeed, was but the culmination of a movement that had its source, not in an individual poet, but in the new audience and in the new time. It was the critics he had to fight; for criticism ever affiliates to the established rules, customs, and culture of a time; its only chance of having authority is to cling to what the vanishing age has used as the fundamental principles of of its art; its essence is to analyse new products, and to compare them with what seemed fixed standards; it is, therefore, rarely sympathetic, or imaginative, and almost never originative. There was enough of the old in Gray, Collins, Goldsmith, Chatterton, Burns, and Cowper, to satisfy it. Blake it ignored. Wordsworth deliberately rejected the cues and standards of the passing age, and accepted everything that the coming time and the new audience demanded. Hence the long and fierce conflict.

15. The central doctrine of the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads is that the poet should use "a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation". And Wordsworth felt that this would separate his readers into scornful critics and devoted worshippers, the effect of every new method or gospel. "They, who have been accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers", "will look round for poetry and will be induced to inquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title". The principal object proposed in them was to "choose incidents and situations from common life", to put them in "language really used by men", "to throw

over them a certain colouring of imagination"; and to trace in them "the primary laws of our nature". "Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil", "are less under restraint and speak a plainer and more emphatic language"; there "the elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity", and the "manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings", and "are more easily comprehended and more durable"; there too "the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature," whilst the language is purer and more fundamental, simpler and less conventional, "more permanent", and "far more philosophical", "than that which is frequently substituted for it by poets". Nothing could state so well the qualities of the literature the coming audience had been familiar with through its long period of submergence, the Authorised Version of the Bible and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress; nothing could describe so well the ideal of Cowper and Burns and Blake, or the achievement of the two latter; nothing could sound so like a prophecy of the coming literature. The writer was only the mouthpiece of the new movement. In practice his very deliberateness and sense of his own purpose and theory often led him into such obtrusion of it as to make his poems prosaic in treatment and barren in diction; he forgot the "colouring of imagination", in the eagerness to pourtray common life, and the "selection", in his eagerness to give the "language really used by men"; it was chiefly in his philosophical blank verse that his theory and his art amalgamated.

16. He has heard the "outcry against the triviality and meanness" of some of the contemporary verse-writers. But he claims that each poem of his is distinguished from theirs by having "a worthy purpose"; for good poetry though "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings", must be produced by one who "has thought long and deeply", and has a noble character. And further, in his poems, the feeling "gives importance to the action and situation", and not the reverse, as in "the popular poetry of the day"—evidently the poetry of the Dellacruscan school. He

protests against the "application of gross and violent stimulants" to the human mind, "frantic novels, sickly and stupid German tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse", and thinks that the "thirst after outrageous stimulation" has arisen from "the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies". Here Wordsworth has well-nigh struck on the essential source of all the new movements in literature, not merely those which he condemns, but those which he claims to represent—the disturbance of established habits of the population by the industrial current, causing as it did the migration to cities and the upheaval of the submerged classes with their ideas, tastes, and demands. The eagerness for "outrageous stimulation", the yearning for simpler themes and language were both from the same source. Wordsworth stood by the tastes that had their roots in far back national life, and fought against those that came from the requirements of a passionate city life. It was the industrial revolution that caused the re-emergence of the one set, and the appearance of the other.

**17.** It was really the renaissance of old national feeling and art in the resurrection of the middle classes, that made him reject "what is usually called poetic diction", the product of the severance of literature from the nation by Queen Anne culture, and of the eighteenth century spirit that flowed from it. He deliberately struggles against this artificiality of expression and rejects all "personifications of abstract ideas", wherever they are a "mechanical device of style" and not "prompted by passion". He tries to keep his reader "in the company of flesh and blood", and "endeavours to look steadily at his subject", to avoid "falsehood of description", disproportionate treatment, and hackneyed language, however well it may sound, in short trusts an essential of all good poetry, "good sense". Truth in all things is what he aims at, even though he should be charged with "prosaisms".

18. And here again he strikes upon a principle that was not understood by him in its full sense, and is not yet appreciated; it is that the language of good poetry, "except with reference to the metre, in no respect differs from good prose", that "the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose, when prose is well written". He illustrates by the analysis of a sonnet of Gray's, and insists that the true antithesis is not poetry and prose, but poetry and "matter of fact or science". "There neither is nor can be any *essential* difference between the language of prose and metrical composition". "Selection", "made with true taste and feeling", is all he can point out as differentiating the two. But a little thought might have shown him that selection can be as active in writing good prose as in writing good poetry. His fundamental distinction is metre: "the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed in various moods and in a less excited state, cannot but have preat efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling"; "more pathetic situations and sentiments, that is, those which have a greater proportion of pain connected with them, may be endured in metrical composition, especially in rhyme, than in prose"; we are reluctant to reperuse "the distressful parts of Clarissa Harlowe"; "while Shakespeare's writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us as pathetic beyond the bounds of pleasure"; this, he holds, is due to the metrical arrangement. It would be easy to find a more substantial reason in the superficial insight and sentimentalism of Richardson and in the deep thought that inspires and inheres in Shakespeare's most tragic passages, making the mind of the reader think as well as feel. The chief discovery he made was that the greatest imaginative prose and the greatest poetry have no essential difference; hence it was that, in his noblest and most philosophical moods, he resorted, like Shakespeare and Milton before him, to very varied blank verse; and hence it is that the most impassioned pieces of prose in our century have a rhythm that reminds of blank verse, but carefully avoids its monotony. The time is not far distant when the larger harmonies of the best prose will be as much enjoyed by

the cultivated ear as the delights of verse, and imaginative writers will seek musical prose as the more natural medium of their greater creations and thoughts; the recurrent decay of the taste for poetry, and the steady yet rapid advance in imaginative prose, point in the same direction.

19. In the latter half of the essay comes the description of the poet's art, as penetrative, as glowing, and as melodious as the best parts of his Prelude and Excursion. It is not a mere "matter of amusement and idle pleasure"; its "object is truth", "carried alive into the heart by passion"; "poetry is the image of man and nature", "an acknowledgement of the beauty of the universe", and the poet must "look at the world in the spirit of love"; "he considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature"; "poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge"; "it is the impassioned expression that is in the countenance of all science"; "poetry is the first and last of all knowledge; it is as immortal as the heart of man"; the poet "looks before and after", "carrying everywhere with him relationship and love"; "if the time should ever come when what is now called science, familiarised to man, shall be ready to put on as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man". Here again he strikes on one of the deeper principles in the evolution of literature; the material, the ideas, the figures, and the symbols, that an imaginative work makes use of, must have become familiar to the audience addressed, to their feelings and passions; hence the failure of Blake when he came to use a symbolism and a circle of ideas, that were mystical and remote from the life of the new audience; and hence the fact that new discoveries have to wait almost a generation before they are ready for use in poetry. Thus the speculations of Newton came in as true poetic material at the close of last century, whilst the geological and physiological speculations of the close of last century had to wait for Byron and Shelley, Browning and Tennyson, and

Darwin's ideas are only now ready for a new type of poetry and imaginative prose.

**20.** What is deepest and best in Wordsworth is scarcely touched by his theory; it is the spiritual power of rising above the common and the commonplace, and giving it such philosophical meaning, as to make it almost sublime; it is the interfusion of philosophy and poetry; it is still more the lofty moral attitude he takes, idealising and giving deep significance to the most trivial detail. One of the finest instances of this, "Lines left upon a seat in a yew tree" was written as early as 1795; and that it is in his own free but musical blank verse shows how early his ear told him what was the appropriate medium of such impassioned philosophy; he begins by bidding the traveller rest in the solitude;

> "the curling waves
> That break against the shore shall lull thy mind
> By one soft impulse saved from vacancy".

He describes the man, who built the seat and enjoyed it, a solitary driven from the world by neglect, to nurse his soul in indignation and pride. He loved the beauty of the scene, yet would his "fancy feed" on "visionary views", "till his eyes streamed with tears". "In this deep vale he died". It is the lesson from this life that contains the poet's lofty moral attitude; he warns the stranger that "pride is littleness", that

> "he, who feels contempt
> For any living thing, hath faculties,
> Which he has never used; that thought with him
> Is in its infancy", "O be wiser, thou!
> Instructed that true knowledge leads to love".

This is the inner secret of Wordsworth's power over the higher spirits of our century.

## Section 28.

**1.** Coleridge had the same sense of superiority to all that is mean and all that is contemptuous, the same idealistic philosophy that insisted on the nobler elements of life and the necessity of love for the poetic interpretation of the world. And in his Biographia Literaria (1817), a

philosophical analysis and defence of true poetry, he pointed out the spiritual charm of Wordsworth's best poetry, whilst at the same time showing his dissent from the theory as stated in the preface and its variance from the poet's own practice even in his most commonplace ballads like The Thorn. In the same apology for his poetical career he gives an account of the inception of the Lyrical Ballads practically in consonance with that given by Wordsworth; he shows that his contribution was to be from the supernatural, making it as human and as interesting as his fellow-poet was to make his scenes from common and lowly life; he wrote The Ancient Mariner for it, and "was preparing among other poems The Dark Ladie and the Christabel, in which he should have more nearly realised his ideal than he had done in his first attempt". He never finished these and did not publish them in the volume, nor does he seem from the existing fragments to have approached The Ancient Mariner in giving human interest to the supernatural. Besides his ballad his contribution consisted of two scenes called The Dungeon, from Osorio, an unpublished drama, a Wordsworthian piece of blank verse, "The Nightingale, a Conversation Poem", and the ballad-lyric from the proposed Dark Ladie called "Love". The last has only one stanza that can be said to refer in any way to the supernatural; the knight, whose story the poet sings to Genevieve in order to subdue her love, saw "an angel beautiful and bright" look in his face and knew that "it was a fiend". The piece is quite in the spirit of the sentimentalism that entered so lavishly into the romances of the time and shows that Coleridge was in the eighteenth century greatly influenced by the two movements, the romantic and the sentimental, so much scorned by Wordsworth; it also shows how much more susceptible he was to the true ballad atmosphere than his friend. It is very musical and repeats words and refrains like the ballads; but it is the first stanza, containing as it does one of the central doctrines of the new poetic creed, that is best known;—

> "All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
> Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
> All are but ministers of Love,
> And feed his sacred flame.

2. It is however only The Ancient Mariner, that fulfils his idea of creating human interest in the supernatural, and completely succeeds in adapting the ballad style to modern tastes. The earlier form of this poem, as it appeared in Lyrical Ballads is closely modelled on the ballad as seen in Percy's Reliques. The later form has got clear of innumerable archaisms like "ne" for "nor", drouth" for "drought", "withouten", "pheer", "sterte", "eldritch", "beforne", "een", "ee", "n'old", "aventure", "what manner man"; it has retained only as many as to give a quaint flavour without needing a commentary to make them understood. With its running commentary, it is more connected and intelligible, and it has abandoned many verses and lines and expressions that have the cruder features and repetitions of the old ballad. It is the first version that is more instructive as to Coleridge's connection with the eighteenth century, and is most worth analysing as an evidence of the mingling of the two periods after the Revolution. There is in it a little of that stucco Gothic which was made so much of in The Castle of Otranto and other attempts in fiction to return to the mediaeval world and its chivalry and its supernaturalisms; there are the old belief in the efficacy of the sign of the cross against evil spirits, and in a spell brought on by a curse, the appeal to "Mary queen of heaven", the presence of holy hermits who shrive great sinners, the idea of perpetual wandering from land to land and repetition of some act as penance for some great sin, as in the legend of the Wandering Jew, the ubiquity of spirits evil and good through all elements, the conflict of evil and good spirits for souls, and the power of sinning and goodness, of spirits and demons over the sun, moon, and stars, and the elements. Beside these are set pictures from Holbein's Dance of Death, the dead rising and doing the common labours of men, the seraphs standing over corpses, and Death and his paramour dicing for human lives; two stanzas that give the most unearthly description of death, quite in the style of Holbein, are omitted from the later version,—

"His bones were black with many a crack,
All black and bare I ween;
Jet black and bare, save where with rust
Of mouldy damps and charnel crust,
They're patched with purple and green".

" A gust of wind sterte up behind,
And whistled thro' his bones :
Thro' the holes of his eyes and the hole of his mouth
Half-whistles and half-groans ".

There are elements from a still later age, from the Elizabethan ; the spectral ship is out of the legend of The Flying Dutchman, which was born of the sea-adventures of the time of English and Dutch rivalry and the floating mediaeval superstitions ; whilst the sweet sounds in the air and all round the ship in the fifth part after the partial undoing of the curse are clearly from The Tempest and the music of Ariel. Thus the ages are mingled quite in the style of the Gothic romances of the time.

3. And interfused with this amalgam of various olden times are unmistakable traces of the modern spirit, and even of the new spirit that was coming over literature as the century closed. We have the Protestant phases of Christianity in the congregation in the " kirk ", where " each to his great father bends ", " old men and babes ", the appeals to Christ, and the great emphasis laid upon the prayer of the worshipper and its efficacy ; in the later version he gets clear of one of these by substituting

" And never a saint took pity on
Me in my agony ",

for

" And Christ would take no pity on &c ".

The passionate love of country and home, so strongly expressed at the end of the ballad, is to a large extent modern, a growth of that emigrative faculty which arose again in Western man with the expansion of commerce and adventure. So the nautical atmosphere that is around the whole poem belonged to the two preceding centuries ; it came from the Voyages that Wordsworth and he had been reading and from the love of " bursting " first " into silent seas " that still lingered from Elizabethan times along the coast of Devonshire ; both Arctic and tropical adventures are drawn upon. There is even in the use of older language a mark of the new archæology and philology ; we have nothing of the artificial jumble of glossaries that clogs the poetry of Chatterton ; the old idioms and words are on the whole accurately used, and the archaic colours are no

on "with a trowel". Yet even in this true work of art we have the incongruity of modernisms; "an it dodged a water-sprite" is a strangely prosaic medley of new and old; so too is "with heavy thump, a lifeless lump"; "the garden-bower", "the skiff-boat neared", "the rotted old oak-stump", "for a charnel dungeon fitter", "as soft as honey-dew", "a hundred fire-flags' sheen" have a modern ring in them; the "seraph-band" that waved their hands over the corses to signal the approach of the ship to the harbour belongs to the eighteenth century hymnology. The poet became conscious of some of the incongruities, and for "The Marineres gave it biscuit worms" substituted "It ate the food it ne'er had eat"; but some of his substitutions are not improvements; *e.g.* "I heard the skylark sing" for "I heard the lavrock sing", "the star-dogged moon" for "the horned moon"; and of the sun setting,

> "Still hid in mist and on the left
> Went down into the sea",

is less poetical than

> "And broad as a weft upon the left
> Went down into the sea".

The greatest improvement in the second version is a new stanza in the third part;—

> "The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;
> At one stride comes the dark;
> With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
> Off shot the spectre-bark."

The picture-similes and metaphors belong rather to the new poetry than to the old ballads; the moon mocked the sea "like morning frosts yspread"; when the water-snakes reared, "the elfish light fell off in hoary flakes", and "every track was a flash of golden fire"; the spectre-sails "glance in the sun like restless gossamers"; "idle as a painted ship, Upon a painted ocean"; the wind "fanned my cheek, Like a meadow-gale in spring"; the sails seem to the hermit like "the skeletons of leaves that lag My forest brook along". These and other descriptions of nature form indeed one of the chief marks of the kinship of the poem to the Lake school; there is not the mere picturesqueness that had grown in poetry all through the latter part of the eighteenth century, fostered by landscape painting; but

there are flashes of insight into the living spirit of nature. Another mark of the new poetry and time is the insistence on reverence for life, even animal life; this is the moral of the poem; the killing of the albatross

> "that loved the man,
> Who shot him with his bow",

is the cause of all the woe and agony so painfully depicted; and this is closely connected with the new idealisation of Christianity, that made love the primary and universal duty to "all things both great and small", and appeared in Cowper and Blake before it appeared in Wordsworth; it is this that supplies the pivot of the story; when the curse of the slain albatross has brought death into the spectre ship to the "four fifty times living men" of the crew, (an extraordinary number even in a modern ship), and death's "pheer", "Life in Death", as the later version calls her, has chosen the violator of the kinship of nature for her prey, whilst prayer will not come but only "a wicked whisper" that makes the "heart dry as dust", it is a sudden impulse of delight in the beautiful water-snakes, "a spring of love from his heart", that undoes the horror of the curse; "the albatross falls off" his neck, and sinks into the sea; and sleep comes upon him; the dead crew navigate the ship, and a spirit "from the land of mist and snow" under the keel, the spirit that loved the albatross, hurries it north to his native land that he may live always and fulfil the curse by telling his story and its moral, love for all and through all, to every traveller whom his instinct selects;

> "He prayeth well who loveth well
> Both man and bird and beast";
> "For the dear God, who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all".

This is a conclusion that could never have occurred to any age before Coleridge's; in mediaeval story it is the horror and ghastliness of the curse that clings to the victim; here his penance is to become an itinerant preacher and reformer such as the poet was at the time he wrote this, such as so many of Wordsworth's heroes are. But, interwoven with this love of humanity and all living things, there is a strange contradiction of it; two hundred innocent men have to lose their lives for the one albatross that was

shot; this comes from the old primitive creeds, from the Old Testament and mediaeval idea of a God of vengeance. This religious element had drifted down through the Puritan love of the Old Testament, that the fierceness of the Civil War developed, into the evangelical movement that appeared with the emergence of the middle classes. The contradiction lay in the struggle of two eras that met at the turning of the centuries. Cowper reveals it most plainly; we have almost side by side in his poetry the belief in the love that pervades or should pervade all nature and the belief in the ultimate and everlasting punishment of the bulk of the human race for the fault of one and for their own ignorance of the remedy. Burns has it in him, though all his sympathies were with the new time and the new creed of universal love. Wordsworth, the prophet of the new faith, unconsciously falls into its conventional opposite. It is only Blake that turns his face completely to the coming time and will have no part or lot in the old vindictive creed, no conditioning of the belief in universal forgiveness, all-pervading love; but he lived, though always a dweller in London, more like a seer, apart from the world, in an ideal sphere of his own, than any man of modern times.

4. And his name suggests another striking quality in this ballad—its dreamy atmosphere. None of the critics of Ossian ever failed to point out this feature of it that at once established its modernity; none of the epics or ballads of the olden times but have their figures and incidents and story in the clearest relief; there is no mistaking what the narrator means to tell. It was one of the most distinctive tricks of the new art to throw a diaphanous veil over its theme, half to conceal and half to reveal. The result in the hands of inferior artists was blurred edges, indistinctness of outline, and unintelligibility, with stronger natures greater sublimity and a certain mystic ideality; Macpherson's medley and Horace Walpole's romance are excellent instances of the one, and the Ancient Mariner and many of Turner's pictures of the other. It is difficult to make out a clear current of story in this ballad especially in the older version, where the "pheer" or paramour of Death is left unnamed, and where a number of stanzas in the seventh part,

omitted afterwards, repeat in the manner of the old ballads the supernatural appearance of the seraph-signallers and make the dead bodies without apparent reason stand up as torch-bearers. The spirits too are of the mistiest type; they have no definiteness in their purpose or habits, such as the ghosts and demons in previous literature had; they serve only as a kind of gossamer machinery for the evolution of the curse and the penance.

5. Yet, with all this strange mingling of the old and the new, the mediaeval and the modern, the poem has the unity of effect of a true work of art; it is one of the most striking productions of the new spirit of the close of the eighteenth century; it has all the witchery of the old tales of supernaturalism and all the attractiveness and idealism of the coming creed. The medley of the romantic movement has usually been condemned as leading to false art; but this poem shows how the most heterogeneous materials like those of the "new Gothic" of the eighteenth century might under the transforming power of true imagination become as real art as that of the most self-consistent ages.

6. The same dreamy, only half-transparent art gave birth to Christabel, which was begun in 1797 in Somersetshire for Lyrical Ballads, continued at Keswick in 1800, and, though published in 1816, never finished. It is a far less interesting attempt at the romantic and supernatural; its metre, the accentual, non-syllabic, connects it, as it connects The Ancient Mariner, with the ballads; but it is more irregular in its length of line and size of stanza and in the number of syllables between the accents and attains a melody that is sweeter and yet more varied. The materials are not so heterogeneous or derived from so many ages. And the unity is therefore more easily managed. It adheres in fact to a story that is all mediaeval, and there is a certain monotony in the result. The First Part tells how Christabel, the daughter of the rich baron Sir Leoline, goes out at midnight from the castle into the forest to pray and is there startled by the appearance of

> "A damsel bright,
> Dressed in a silken robe of white,
> That shadowy in the moonlight shone";

she is told by the "lady strange" a story of abduction by five knights; she leads home the fair Geraldine (such is the name she gives); she speaks of her mother's death to the stranger, who cries out, as if she had seen an apparition,

"Off, woman, off! this hour is mine";

it was the dead mother come to guard the purity of her child; she dreams of her whom she had never seen; but she also dreams as she lies by Geraldine dreams of horror and shame. The Second Part fixes the scene at Langdale in the Lake district and introduces many local names; it tells how next morning she rises with a sense of fear and shame and "sins unknown", and leads the stranger to her father, who grows pale when he hears that Geraldine is the daughter of his old friend "Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine", from whom he had been parted in youth by "whispering tongues that poison truth"; he is furious against the abductors, and will "dislodge their reptile souls from their bodies"; he embraces the maiden who is but a serpent in human form; and at the sight his own daughter "shrinks and shudders", and "draws in her breath with a hissing sound"; she is under the spell of the demon, and grows like her in nature; Geraldine prays to be sent home; but the Baron summons his bard Bracy and bids him go for her father; the minstrel tells a dream he has had, that "will not pass away", a dream of a snake and a dove;

"She looks askance at Christabel;
Jesu Maria, shield her well!"

her eyes are shrunk up into a serpent's, "with somewhat of malice and more of dread"; Christabel drinks in these looks "of dull and treacherous hate"; and, feeling the power of the spell, prays her father, "by my mother's soul this woman send away"; Sir Leoline is enraged at this suggested breach of hospitality; and he sends off Bracy. The "Conclusion to Part Second" is somewhat enigmatic; but seems to give a mystic interpretation of the story, and to excuse a father's wild words to his innocent, happy child. There were to have been two other cantos, taking the minstrel to the castle of De Vaux only to find it swept away, and bringing him back to Langdale Hall; Geraldine was then to assume the form of Christabel's absent lover and to

be about to marry her in spite of her loathing, when the true lover returns and the demon vanishes. The famous lines on sundered friendship are the finest in the poem and contain most of the modern feeling in it. Yet its picturesque qualities and its touches of nature bring it into relationship to the Lake school. The meaning is shadowy, and doubtless evaded even the poet, as it does the reader. But it was most natural that the writer of such poetry should, when the mood and fire of youth were gone, turn into a metaphysician of the mystic type.

7. The fragment of "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie", that he wrote, promised a far nearer approach to the true ballad story and style, although touched with the passion of a time of revolution; the dark ladie meets her lover Lord Falkland by the brook in the birch wood and pleads with him to fulfil his promise; he offers her one of his nine fair castles; but she will have none of it without his hand. It has the definiteness and the lyric passion of the ballads.

8. Another fragment, "Kubla Khan or a Vision in a Dream", written in 1797 at a lonely farm-house on Exmoor, shows the culmination of his sensuous dreaminess. In publishing it in 1816 he explained its genesis. He had been reading Purchas's Pilgrimage, and at the sentence that described the building of a great palace by Khan Kubla and the enclosure of ten miles of a garden, an anodyne he had taken overcame him, and he dreamt and composed in his dream from two to three hundred lines of a poem. When he wakened he began to write it down; but a long interruption broke the thread and he could not recover it; the fragment he had written down consisted of only fifty-four lines. It is a by no means sequent account of the palace and garden;

> "It was a miracle of rare device,
> A sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice."

In the garden was a wonderful chasm;—

> "A savage place as holy and enchanted
> As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
> By woman wailing for her demon lover.
> And from this chasm with ceaseless turmoil seething
> As if this earth in fast, thick pants were breathing,
> A mighty fountain momently was forced".

Could he revive within him "the symphony and song" he once in a vision heard an Abyssinian maid sing, then would he "build that dome in air", "that sunny dome, those caves of ice";

> "And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
> His flashing eyes, his floating hair!"
> "For he on honey-dew hath fed,
> And drunk the milk of Paradise".

Thus the fragment closes. There was opiate in the senses and mind that moulded all these dreams, and it is useless to search for definite purpose or form in them. Yet they are the finest fruit of his poetic genius.

9. There is none of this mistiness in the drama, which he had written in 1797, and from which extracts were published in Lyrical Ballads. He changed its name to "Remorse", and the name of the remorseful villain from Osorio to Ordonio; and through Byron's influence it was accepted by the Drury Lane management and produced in 1813, some fifteen years after Sheridan had rejected it for the same theatre. It was a great success, and had a run of twenty nights, putting some ten thousand pounds into the treasury of the theatre. Byron said of it; "we have had nothing to be mentioned in the same breath with Remorse for very many years". Its chief faults are a tendency to melodrama and too sudden a conversion of the villain into the repentant. But once this is said, the rest is all praise; and it shows the degeneracy of the dramatic taste that two such tragedies as the Borderers and Remorse should have had so little encouragement. The plot of Coleridge's is old; two brothers, sons of a Spanish Marquis, Valdez, in the reign of Philip the Second, at the close of the civil wars with the Moors, Alvar and Ordonio, love Teresa the orphan ward of their father; and she is devoted to the elder who has disappeared and is reported to have been captured by Moorish pirates and been slain. The scene opens with his reappearance in Moorish disguise, resolved to unmask the villainy of his brother Ordonio, who had sent assassins to slay him; but he is reluctant for Teresa's sake, who, he thinks, has married his brother. Isidore, one of the Moors who had been sent to assassinate him and relented, is freed from the clutches of the Inquisitor Monviedro by

Ordonio, who fears confession of his guilt on the rack, and who tries to get him to induce Teresa by sorcery to marry him; the Moor recommends Alvar for the task, and the hero meets his brother in a cavern, finds from the interview that his fiancée has been faithful, and agrees to use pretended incantations to persuade her that her lover is dead. In the necromantic scene, Alvar stirs the conscience of his brother; but the Inquisitors burst in and carry him off to the dungeon below the castle. Ordonio meets Isidore his old accomplice in a cavern and kills him; and Alhadra, the widow of the Moor, resolves to avenge the slaughter. Teresa gets the key of the dungeon and enters to consult him whom she thinks a Moorish sorcerer about her Alvar's death. He reveals himself just as his brother enters to slay him. Concealing his bride, he reveals himself to Ordonio too, and awakening remorse in his breast turns by reminiscences of their boyhood his murderous purpose. Alhadra and her Moors burst in and slay the repentant. And the play closes with the sound of prospective wedding-bells. There are scenes and passages of great power in the tragedy; some of Teresa's, Alvar's, and Alhadra's speeches are full of Coleridge's imaginative poetry. One sentence from the soliloquy of Alhadra's in the fourth act will show how subtly he could realise the intricacies of human feeling;—

> "I need the sympathy of human faces,
> To beat away this deep contempt for all things,
> Which quenches my revenge".

The last act is full of the new creed of the power of love and forgiveness; Alvar in his dungeon attacks the theory that punishment will cure vice and crime;

> "There is the process of our love and wisdom
> To each poor brother who offends against us".
> "Is this the only cure? Merciful God!"
> "With other ministration thou, O Nature!
> Healest thy wandering and distempered child".

We have in fact in this play much of the revolutionism that affected Coleridge for a time, his revolt against laws and conventions, and his belief that force was about to give way to love in the government of the world. Alvar is full of this.

> " O let me reconcile him to himself,
> Open the sacred source of penitent tears,
> And be once more his own beloved Alvar ".

**10.** There is not merely the moral phase of revolutionism in the play, but also the political; through it runs the subdued cry of freedom in revolt against tyranny, bursting out at the close into the wild speech of Alhadra to the Moors ;—

> " I thank thee, Heaven ! thou hast ordained it wisely
> That still extremes bring their own cure. That point
> In misery which makes the oppressed man
> Regardless of his own life, makes him too
> Lord of the oppressors.—Knew I a hundred men
> Despairing, but not palsied by despair,
> This arm should shake the kingdoms of the world ".

There is too all through the play a fierce anger against all attempts like the Inquisition to muzzle freedom. The same vehement worship of liberty in the form of revolution appears more vehemently expressed in a play written by Coleridge and Southey, and published by Coleridge as his, when he was at Jesus College, Cambridge, in September 1794; it is The Fall of Robespierre. The two fiery worshippers of revolt and the Revolution had met in June at Oxford, and again in August at Bristol. Along with a friend Robert Lovell they formed, in their enthusiasm for the new ideas, a scheme for ridding themselves of all old-world conventions and modes of life; they resolved to establish what they called a Pantisocracy, or government of all by all, in America, on the banks of the Susquehanna. They also determined one night to write a tragedy as a first attempt at partnership by the next night. Robespierre had just been guillotined, and these adorers of freedom, looking with eyes too near to the event to have perspective, thought that his fall was the destruction of the final barrier to the fulfilment of their dreams of liberty, that now the French republic would show an example of all that was noble to the rest of the world. They chose the event as the theme of their drama of freedom; next day Southey and Lovell had written their instalment, the second and third acts; Coleridge had only partially written his, the first; Lovell's part was inharmonious with the rest, and Southey rewrote it whilst Coleridge finished his. And next month

the result was issued from the press. In the prose dedication to "H. Martin Esq., Jesus College," "yours fraternally, S. T. Coleridge," says; "It has been my sole aim to imitate the passionate and highly figurative language of the French orators, and to develop the characters of the chief actors on a vast stage of horrors". To be of mixed authorship, the style of the play is singularly even all through; it is marked by melodramatic eloquence and forced metaphors and similes; perhaps, if anything, Coleridge's contribution sins most in this respect; it is here we find passages like these most frequent;—

> "the howl of maniac uproar
> Lulls to sad sleep the memory of himself";
> "The giant Victories, my counsels formed,
> Shall stalk around me with sun-glittering plumes,
> Bidding the darts of calumny fall pointless";
> "Even now the vital air
> Of Liberty, condensed a while, is bursting
> To shatter the arch-chemist in the explosion".

Southey's two acts are smoother in their rhetorical flow of eloquence, less broken up by fireworks of simile, more allusive to Roman precedent, and marred by phrases like these; "this fire-fraught 'tube of Justice" (for a pistol), "Guilt's iron fangs engrasp his shrinking soul", "Henriot's boughten succours", and "stained with the deep dye of nobility". Taken as a whole, it is an accumulation of stagy speeches rising at times into the scream of a hoarse melodramatic actor. There is practically no plot; it is merely a series of scenes exhibiting the conflict between Robespierre's party and Tallien's.

10. What is of importance is the light it throws on the passion of the two young poets for liberty and their attitude to the Revolution. Robespierre, they thought, was only an obstacle to the fulfilment of the republican dream, and not a forerunner of the ultimate master of the Revolution. Both of them had already their instinct of revolt stirred; Southey had been expelled from school for an attack on flagellation; Coleridge had been chastised and repressed for his coquettings with scepticism and had left Cambridge in 1793, enlisted in a regiment of dragoons, and been discharged. Both of them were soon to leave their respective universities without degrees and in disgrace for their violently republican and socialistic opinions.

**II.** Next year (1795) they were both in Bristol engaged to two sisters called Fricker and wedded to their pantisocratic dream. To supply funds for its fulfilment, Coleridge delivered a series of lectures on politics and religion, published immediately afterwards under the name of Conciones ad Populum. They were marked by the same violence of style and thought as the drama; in politics they denounced Pitt and all his legislation, and adored liberty; in religion they were Unitarian. In October of the same year he married Sara Fricker, and passed three months of honeymoon in a cottage at Clevedon. Here he wrote a number of his early poems and revised others. And by April 1797 he had the collection in sufficient order to publish it through Cottle in Bristol as Poems on Various Subjects, by S. T. Coleridge, late of Jesus College, Cambridge. It contains most of what he had written between his seventeenth and twenty-fifth years. The poems may be divided into political, religious, philosophical, and descriptive of nature; but there is a tinge of the political, the philosophical, and the worship of nature in most of them. One of the longest of them, in fact one of the longest poems he ever wrote, was called "Religious Musings, a Desultory Poem", completed on Christmas Eve 1794. It shows manifest traces of the close study of Paradise Lost; for it is in Miltonic blank verse, often in Miltonic phraseology, and it is full of apostrophes and invocations. But it is also deeply tinged with the metaphysical tendencies and the mysticism which after his visit to Germany made him a philosophic monologist instead of a poet. This mystic quality appears especially in the passages that, written long before he had met Wordsworth, identify God and Nature, and find all-pervading love the true spirit of the universe;

> "'tis God,
> Diffused through all, that doth make all one whole";

"'tis the sublime of man" "to know ourselves" "parts and proportions of one wondrous whole"; "this fraternises man, this constitutes our charities": "blest are they" who adore "Him, nature's essence, mind, and energy" "nor contempt embosom, nor revenge". He soon launches into fierce tirades against all who help to obstruct this love by

superstition, or trade, which "loud laughing packs his bales of human anguish", or war, and especially against the allied enemies of the new French Republic, Catherine of Russia "that foul woman of the North", Austria, and

> "Each petty German princeling nursed in gore".

He curses Britain for professing "Thee to defend, meek Galilean";

> "O blasphemy! to mingle fiendish deeds
> With blessedness".

He gives a long philosophical account of the origin of society, such as he saw it, based on property, "twy-streaming fount whence vice and virtue flow", and exhibiting "foul oppression's ruffian gluttony", and numberless poor and famished. He curses the press-gang, and prophesies "the day of retribution nigh"; "even now the storm begins", the French Revolution; the "abhorred forms" of tyranny and superstition, "mitred atheism", have "met the horrible judgment"; the kingdoms of the world belong now to "pure faith" and "much piety";

> "each heart
> Self-governed, the vast family of Love,
> Raised from the common earth by common toil,
> Enjoy the equal produce".

He apostrophises Milton, Newton, Priestley, pictures the last day, and closes with an anticipation of his joining the "mystic choir" of "contemplant spirits"; meanwhile he sings "heart-stirring song" and feels that here is mystery;—

> "Life is a vision shadowy of Truth;
> And vice and anguish and the wormy grave,
> Shapes of a dream".

A still longer poem "The Destiny of Nations, a Vision", written also in 1794, is even more Miltonic in its blank verse, phraseology, apostrophes, and aspirations, and is much more obscure; and it is all the worse that it is, like so many of his poems, a fragment. It is a half-allegorical picture of the spirit of freedom. It is Platonist, if not Neoplatonist, and introduces from The Republic the simile of the cave in which men sit, their "backs to bright reality". He finds a spirit in all things, and approves in this respect even the most primitive religions. "Such perhaps the

spirit", that communed with Joan of Arc. This spirit dwelt among the Swiss, and tried to protect them from war; and at the sight of her the "Protoplast", Night, and chaos fled. She watched over the martyrs. And now in England she asks Peace why this island takes to war; the answer is because "the appetites of kings" are sated with "the low flattery of their reptile lords", and "must have keener condiment". The spirit sees Revolution appear, and raises a hymn to God. There are more "prosaisms" in this poem and also more felicities than in the previous; these are instances of the latter;—

"The snowy blast drifts arrowy by";
"had watched
The alien shine of unconcerning stars";
"The night was fanged with frost":
"Ghastly as broad-eyed Slumber".

"The Aeolian Harp" was another blank-verse poem of this early period, written during the happy months at Clevedon in 1796. It is an elaborate analogy between the wind-harp and the human soul; and is filled with the nature-transcendentalism that connects him with the Lake school.

"O the one life within us and abroad".
"Methinks it should have been impossible
Not to love all things in a world so filled."

And animated things are perhaps but "organic harps",

"That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps,
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the soul of each and God of all".

Two pieces of somewhat the same type and written in blank verse were connected with the visit of his old school-fellow Charles Lamb and his sister to him in Somersetshire. One was "To a Friend who had declared his intention of writing no more poetry" and was written in 1796; the other and finer "This Lime-tree Bower my Prison" was written in June 1797 during the visit. In this last he gives beautiful expression to his sense of the brotherhood of nature; "Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure"; it also expresses the delight of friendship with his "gentle-hearted Charles", to whom "no sound is dissonant which tells of Life".

13. His volume of Poems contained a series of Sonnets on Eminent Characters, which he called Effusions in order

to avoid any appearance of rivalry with his sonneteering inspirer W. L. Bowles. They cannot be said to be great successes, having no natural climax. One is on Burke, another on Pitt, a third on Kosciusko, a fourth to Earl Stanhope the sympathiser with the French Revolution. They are full of the revolutionary spirit and were evidently written at the same time as The Destiny of Nations. He describes Pitt, for example, as "yon dark scowler", "who with proud words of dear-loved Freedom came", "and kissed his country with Iscariot mouth", and "Ah! foul apostate from his father's fame", "fixed her on the cross of deep distress". Stanhope he addresses as "Friend of the human race", "Champion of freedom and her God". One "To the Autumnal Moon" is the nearest approach he makes to smypathy with nature; he spoils it by drawing out an analogy between hope and the moon, "mother of wildly-working visions". Another "To the Author of The Robbers" gives a very different impression of this representative of the Storm-and-Stress movement on the German stage from his Critique on Bertram in his Biographia Literaria; it adopts the over-drawn and unnatural sentiment of Schiller's youthful play; "Ah! Bard tremendous in sublimity!"; if he met him "beneath some vast old tempest-swinging wood", he "would brood" "with mute awe", and "then weep aloud in a wild ecstasy".

**14.** A third type of poem in the volume is represented by the Monody on the Death of Chatterton, consisting of irregular lines and stanzas like the ode which he afterwards cultivated. This is not a very philosophical or suggestive poem and one of its best stanzas is taken without acknowledgement from a Sonnet by an old Christ's Hospital school-fellow and a prospective pantisocrat, Favell. It is, like many of these poems, full of the old eighteenth century trick of personifying abstract ideas, Care, Want, Scorn, Despair. He did not abandon the artificiality till he met Wordsworth; for it was natural to his metaphysical turn of mind. The best line in it is this;

"Youth of tumultous soul and haggard eye".

The interest of the poem lies in the autobiographic close. He gives up the theme, "lest kindred woes persuade a

kindred doom"; for he too has had "big gall-drops shook from Folly's wing"; he will seek a "cottaged dell" "o'er the ocean swell"; had Chatterton lived, he would have joined them in their pantisocratic expedition, and driven "the twinkling team", "o'er peaceful Freedom's undivided dale"; yet will he "love to follow the sweet dream", "where Susquehanna pours his untainted stream"; and "raise a solemn cenotaph to thee", "Sweet harper of time-shrouded Minstrelsy".

**15.** There is another relic of the Queen Anne period in his one poem in heroic couplet, "To a young ass, its mother being tethered near it". It belongs to December 1794, three years before he came across Wordsworth; yet it has in it all that simple, almost commonplace, sympathy with the lowliest phases of animal life which reached its climax in "Peter Bell". He pities "the little foal of an oppressed race"; "I love the languid patience of thy face"; and he pities the ass too with its circle of grass all eaten, "pity, best taught by fellowship of woe"; "half famished in a land of luxury"; he would take the young one with him as a pantisocrat;

> "I hail thee brother, spite of the fool's scorn";
> "And fain would take thee with me, in the dell
> Of peace and mild equality to dwell".

Lewti or The Circassian Love-Chaunt is dated by him 1795, although it did not appear till the last years of the century. It has little likeness to his early poems, and belongs rather to the dreamily sensuous series, that includes Christabel and Kubla Khan; although it has syllabic metre, it has the octosyllabic line and the irregularly lyrical stanza; these are amongst the best lines;—

> "It is a breezy jasmine-bower,
> The nightingale sings o'er her head;
> Voice of the night! Had I the power
> That leafy labyrinth to thread,
> And creep, like thee, with soundless tread,
> I then might view her bosom white,
> Heaving lovely to my sight".

**16.** Early in 1797 with Charles Lloyd, a new friend, he removed to Nether Stowey in Somersetshire, into a cottage given by an old friend and patron, Thomas Poole. Here

he prepared a second edition of his poems, omitting nineteen and adding twelve. The best of these additions was the Ode to the Departing Year, written in December 1796, and already published in the Cambridge Intelligencer and in pamphlet. It is in the regular Pindaric form adopted by Gray with ode and epode, strophe and antistrophe. It apostrophises the "spirit who sweepest the wild harp of Time", and "divinest Liberty"; and he attacks the allied enemies of France again with fierce invective; he calls upon an avenger for "Afric's wrongs"; he mourns over Albion "not yet enslaved, not wholly vile"; his heart warms to his "mother isle"; yet he tells her, "the nations curse thee" and "thy predestined ruins rise"; he must give up this "loud lament", and "recentre his immortal mind", "in the deep sabbath of meek self-content". In its barren eloquence it is a great contrast to the rich fervour of "France, an Ode", dated February 1797, but really belonging to 1798, when it appeared in The Morning Post under the title of "Recantation". In it he showed that within two years he had reversed his attitude to France, and was as violent against her as he had been passionate in her cause. It was the beginning of his recession into the hardest conservatism both in politics and religion. He had been the most vehement of the young revolutionary poets; he suffered the quickest and most complete apostacy. The immediate cause of the change was the attack made by the French Directory on the freedom of the Swiss republic at the close of 1797. The ode is truly Miltonic in its apostrophes to Freedom; the opening piece is the finest; he appeals to the clouds "whose pathless march no mortal can control", to the ocean waves that "yield homage only to eternal laws", to the woods "that listen to the night-birds singing", to the "rising sun", to the "blue rejoicing sky", to witness

> "With what deep worship I have still adored
> The spirit of divinest Liberty".

At the French Revolution he "sang unawed" his "lofty gratulation", "amid a slavish band", and when Britain joined its foes, in spite of the friendships and loves that "flung a magic light o'er all her hills and groves", he sang defeat and wept for his country; he cared not for the

atheistic blasphemy of the revolutionists; he loved liberty; but now that France attacks freedom and a patriot race, he will curse her; his dream is broken; he must seek liberty "on the sea cliff's verge"; there as he stands and shoots his

> "being through earth, sea, and air,
> Possessing all things with intensest love",

his spirit feels freedom. He has reached his most majestic power of expression in this ode.

**17.** Two of the finest of his blank-verse pieces are also dated 1798, Fears in Solitude, and Frost at Midnight. The former was written during the alarm of an invasion, and mourns over the wrongs and sins his country has committed,

> "Bartering freedom and the poor man's life for gold",

making "the book of life" "a superstitious instrument" on which "we gabble o'er the oaths we mean to break"; he laments the clamour for war and bloodshed, the "dainty terms for fratricide", and he prophesies evil days; but, echoing the prayer of Henry the Fifth in Shakespeare's play, he begs Heaven to "spare us yet awhile", and repel "an impious foe, impious and false, a light yet cruel race". He has spoken, and yet speaks, bitter truth to his brethren, and he closes with a fervid burst of patriotism, and a return to the religion of nature, with which he opened; as he looks over the scene,

> "all my heart
> Is softened, and made worthy to indulge
> Love, and the thoughts that yearn for human kind".

For he has found "religious meanings in the forms of nature". In the other poem he ponders over the flickering fire and the "numberless goings on of life inaudible as dreams"; he thinks of his "sweet birth-place and the old church tower"; and, addressing his babe "that sleepest cradled by my side", he tells it of his rearing in the great city, where he "saw nought lovely but the sky and stars";

> "But thou, my babe, shalt wander like a breeze
> By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
> Of ancient mountains, and beneath the clouds";

there to learn "that eternal language which thy "God utters"; "there all seasons shall be sweet to thee". He had evidently resolved to give up pantisocracy and retire to the Lake district with Wordsworth.

18. But meanwhile he went to Germany and learned German and German metaphysics. His "Lines written in the Hartz Forest" on the Brocken, though touched with his insight into the spirit of nature, is ominous of the decline of his poetic power, it is so forced and so unfelicitous in its blank verse. When he returned to England in 1799 he began to contribute to The Morning Post again; and the humorous poem The Devil's Thoughts, and the War Eclogue "Fire, Famine and Slaughter" denouncing Pitt again, show what a low ebb his imagination could reach. The best work he did in the last year of the century was to translate two parts of Schiller's Wallenstein, The Piccolomini, and The Death of Wallenstein. He inaugurated the era of a new and more elevated Germanism in English literature.

19. Thus all the best of Coleridge's poetry was produced before 1800. His poetic impulse sprang from the Revolution, and, as antagonism to it grew upon him, died out. His imagination had that sensitive tenuity which must have an atmosphere exactly adapted to it. Great passion was alone capable of keeping it from domination by the intellect. For he was by nature as much critical as creative. Had his youth fallen in any other decade than the last of last century, we should never have known him as a poet. At no other time did idealism and passion coalesce and rise to unaccustomed heights. It is well too that he belonged to the resurgent middle class, the new audience, and felt the warm influence of its finest ideals. Had he been born to Toryism and opposition to the revolutionary currents of the time, he might have been a satirist or a political orator for a time; but he would never have been a romantic poet or a poet of nature and love and ideality. It is generally supposed that the opium habit killed the poet in him and developed the metaphysician; after a full analysis of his poetry it seems more likely that the change was due to the evanescence of so great a revolutionary passion as he experienced; only such intensity could have overcome his constitutional lethargy and fired his nature to such a glow that his active intellect with its bent towards abstract thought became suffused with passion and was willing to work in the mould that passion and the new spirit and the new audience

gave. Each of his finest poems came from an imaginative mood worked to a white heat till it had most of the characteristics of a dream. However heterogeneous the reading and instincts and materials that appear in it, it is all unified by this passionate dream-faculty. His time and his class and audience were the soil out of which he grew; only the tropical noon of the revolutionary passion could ever have brought his lethargic, metaphysical imagination to such exotic bloom as The Ancient Mariner and his finer poems.

## Section 29.

**1.** Southey's nature lay under the same wealth of revolutionary sunshine and felt its effect; but it was more methodic, active, and intellectual; it was incapable of great inspirations and could work without the appropriate atmosphere or the great passion. He was therefore more versatile, and unfailingly industrious, but seldom rose above the even level of his powers. Without the revolutionary fervour he would have been a Grub Street hack of the commonest kind. With it he was able to become a poet; but when his sympathy passed into antagonism he naturally preferred prose as his medium of thought. His great poetic period was practically over by the end of the century just as Coleridge's was. He wrote his best epic after that, "Roderic, the Last of the Goths", and, what he considered the best epic since Paradise Lost, Madoc; but it was prose into which he put his best thoughts and powers; and his Conservative reaction had begun by the beginning of our century and completed itself by 1807, when he accepted a government pension.

**2.** He had the misfortune to catch early in life the eighteenth century passion for long narrative or didactic poems, chiefly in blank verse, and the still greater misfortune to be capable and desirous of the encyclopedic ambitions of the new learning. The two have practically buried him under his huge epics and countless volumes. And yet great bonfires of manuscript had punctuated the history of his boyhood and youth. Like Wordsworth's, his poems need ruthless sifting, and in the productions of the

last decade of last century will be found far the most interesting and the most illustrative of the period.

3. Of his longer poems, his Joan of Arc was his first. In 1792 he had been expelled from Westminster School for attributing the invention of flogging to the devil, and in 1793 he was at Balliol College, Oxford, when he conceived the idea of an epic about the French heroine; in that year he went to stay with an old schoolfellow at Brixton, and he carried out the conception in six weeks. Cottle of Bristol offered to publish it, and it appeared in 1796, but completely rewritten; he took six months to revise what he had written in six weeks. It was the product of his revolutionary fervour, which had been roused into great activity by the alliance against the young republic, and by the accession of England to the ranks of her enemies. A French subject like this was the opportunity he required; and in the early editions of the poem there were passages that he felt it necessary to expunge when he became the pensioner of the government; but even in its emasculated form it bears many traces of his republican ardour, and the new spirit of benevolence. The heroine is ever crying out against the miseries and cruelties of war, and again and again restrains the troops she leads, when they would follow up victory. She is especially indignant against England and Henry the Fifth for the curse they have brought upon France by their ambition. And this is not the only poem in which Southey expresses his condemnation of that much-praised monarch. "God shall hear the widow's groan", "woe to the mighty ones that send abroad their ministers of death", "a little while" shall the lowly "endure the proud man's contumely"; expressions like these run all through the poem. And into the texture of it is woven one of the injustices of the French King Charles; one of the bravest of the warriors, Conrade, has had his betrothed Agnes Sorel drawn from him and made the royal paramour; early in the story he comes to court to express his wild indignation; Joan pities him, and the two fight side by side, protecting each other; and at the close she reads a lesson to the king on his duties, not to tear his people from their homes to slaughter, not to let avarice grind the poor. One of Conrade's speeches, in

the seventh book, gives full expression to the teaching of Rousseau, and paints the primitive age of happiness, when "all the family of man freely enjoyed their goodly heritage". Joan expresses Southey's Unitarian stage of religious development; she is inspired by God and continually appeals to heaven, but she will have nothing to do with the ceremonies of the church; when the Bastard Orleans has brought her to the king at Chinon, and she has explained her divine message before him and the assembled "prelates and priests and doctors" of the church, they ask her whether she has been "a duteous child of holy church", confessed, and sought absolution; she answers that in childhood it was only "artificial awe" she felt for "the forms of worship", "a cold damp" chilled her on the threshold of a church; it was only "a God of Terrors" made her tremble before the crucifix; but in riper years she saw "the eternal energy pervade the boundless range of nature and felt love through the whole world"; she fled "the house of prayer", and "made the lonely grove her temple"

> "or laid me down
> Beside the rivulet, whose murmuring
> Was silence to my soul, and marked the swarm
> Whose light-edg'd shadows on the bedded sand
> Mirror'd their mazy sports—the insect hum,
> The flow of waters, and the song of birds
> Making a holy music to mine ear".

It was for "such intense delight of quiet adoration" she forsook "the house of worship"; she had "no thought of sin and did not need forgiveness". The priests are horror-struck and propose that her divine mission should be tested by the ordeal of being plunged into a pool to see if she will float and of walking over red-hot plough-shares. The bastard will not hear of such a thing, and resolves that they try the "noblest ordeal" of victory over the English host; a pale blue flame from a "trophied tomb" beside, and "a sound of arms" within it, back up her champion. Southey, in fact, many years before he had met Wordsworth, was a nature-worshipper, and makes his heroine the same; she thinks that the birds

> "did warble forth
> Sweeter thanksgiving to Religion's ear,

> In their wild melody of happiness,
> Than ever rung along the high-arched roof
> Of man."
> "It is not nature that doth lead to sin;
> Nature is all benevolence, all love".

There is no vice, no misery in "the greenwood's quiet shade", no wretched mother "famine-fallen", whose wan look "shall one day with damning eloquence against the oppressor plead". "Nature teach sin!" "Oh blasphemy against the holy One who made us all for happiness and love". Scattered over the poem there are pictures of nature such as might have come from him during his later residence amongst the Lakes. But the pictures of battle and slaughter necessarily predominate; for he had the Iliad in his mind, and the later epics modelled on it; he had read translations of it, and of Tasso's Jerusalem Freed, Camoens' Lusiad, and Ariosto's Orlando Furioso; he had likewise read The Faery Queen. There had been published posthumously Glover's huge unread epic, The Athenaid, when he was a boy at school; this and the Leonidas of the same poet had a great influence over his young imagination, stirring him to raptures for liberty, and to ambition to write similar long epics. Before he left school he had also read Goethe's Werther and the novels of Rousseau. And thus was he completely ready for his task. The fighting scenes in the siege of Orleans that he lengthens out and so monotonously repeats are evidently modelled on the Iliad and its imitations. But through them runs a suppressed romance; the old lover of Joan, Theodore, follows her to the war; he is bidden return home; but he remains and fights in disguise; he kills the English leader Salisbury, and is slain; Joan then discovers him, and she and Conrade bear him to his burial in a neighbouring abbey; the monks try to persuade her to remain, now that her task of driving out the English is past; but she indignantly refuses even though she has seen in vision her ultimate fate, her *auto da fe* as a witch. The poem goes no farther than the raising of the siege of Orleans, the pursuit of the English, and the crowning of Charles at Rheims.

4. In the original draft of the poem there had been interwoven with it a thread of allegory, with a tendency to eighteenth century personifications. From the ultimate form this disappeared, and then a vision of Joan's in the ninth book became an excrescence ; it was taken out of its setting and made into a separate poem called The Vision of the Maid of Orleans. Whilst asleep after her work of freeing the beleaguered city she seems to be led by Despair into the dwelling of the dead and to be shown all the horrors of death ; the personified abstraction ever and anon offers her a dagger to destroy herself with ; she steadily refuses ; in the Second Book the fiend vanishes, and the angel form of her dead Theodore takes his place ; and he leads her to see the punishments of the various vices and offences ; Care sleeplessly toils in a forge ; the wealthy sit in cells "brilliant with gem-born light" over the useless treasures ; gluttons have all they wish on earth and are sick of it ; here are seducers, hypocrites, the malicious, the cruel to animals, slave-traffickers, cardinals, "the servants of the servants of the Lord", the writers of "lascivious lays" alive yet "loathly corpses", monarchs "the murderers of mankind", "each bearing on his brow a crown of fire", and worst of all "the hero-conquerer of Agincourt, Henry of England" who tells her of all the atrocities he had perpetrated ; here they are to remain in the house of Penitence,

> "till the whole human race,
> Equalling in bliss the aggregate we caused
> Of wretchedness, shall form one brotherhood,
> One universal family of love".

In the Third Book they go to the cavern of Futurity ; she refuses "to read the book of fate" ; but at her own request she sees the cottage of her old uncle Claude where she was brought up, and she meets her dead friend Madelon, who had with her so often gazed

> "Into the dark, deep sky, till the baffled soul,
> Lost in the infinite return'd, and felt
> The burthen of her bodily load, and yearned
> For freedom".

And with this spirit as guide they see the happy vale wherein those "who nurse on earth their nature's gentlest feelings" dwell ; and Theodore descants on the growth of oppression and

poverty, and depicts the time when "Earth shall once again be Paradise", where "Virtue and Equality" shall "preserve the reign of Love." There is a reminiscence in this of the Divine Comedy of Dante, as well as much of the artificialities of the eighteenth century, and much of the romanticism of the new era with its love of sentiment and of supernatural horrors.

5. But there was in both these poems an ominous fluency that meant the absence of deep or penetrative thought, creative imagination, or close-wrought art. He was but twenty-two when his Joan of Arc was published; and yet he had sketched out many epics, a series, for example, on the religions of the world; one of these he was busy with before the century closed; it was Thalaba The Destroyer, which did not appear till 1801; it embodied the spirit of Arabian worship, and tells in irregular but often very musical unrhymed lines the quest of a young hero Thalaba for the slayer of his father and his destruction of the Domdaniel, the hall of sorcerers underneath the ocean; it contains many brilliant and striking pictures of nature. He had already finished Madoc, a narrative poem in blank verse on the adventures of a Welsh hero who was supposed to have emigrated to America in the 12th century and established the Christian religion in Missouri driving out the Aztecs into Mexico. By midsummer 1799 he had "reached the penultimate book" of his work which he would not call by "the degraded title of epic"; but he did not publish it till 1805. He had begun it at Bath in the autumn of 1794; he thought it would "probably be the greatest poem he should ever produce"; and so he kept it by him for revision. It is in two parts; in the first, Madoc in Wales, the Welsh hero has returned from America to his native land, and has to encounter the trail of the Saxon over it; he leaves in disgust; in the second part, Madoc in Aztlan, he fights with the Aztecs and defeats them, and they, warned by the outburst of their sacred volcano at the close of the century, leave their country and emigrate to Mexico. Southey tells us that the poem was much influenced by Landor's Gebir; it is still more deeply tinged with Ossian, though the sentences are much longer; there

is the same imitation sublimity, the same love of sounding names, and something of the same seeming definiteness, but real vagueness, in the conception of the scenes.

6. He had also read with great delight in boyhood Shakespeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher; and his first literary achievement was in the dramatic form; in 1794, when twenty years of age, he put into Wat Tyler all his revolutionary ardour and all the new socialistic ideas. To shame him, when he had become a hard and fast Tory, it was surreptitiously published in 1817. He therefore included it in the complete edition of his works in 1837, in order that it might not be supposed "that he was more ashamed of having been a republican than of having been a boy". The drama consists of three acts and represents Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, and John Ball as patriots and martyrs. The wild tirades against over-taxation were well-timed considering how much Pitt was trying to extract from the country. In the first scene Wat is mournful at the door of his forge and Hob Carter talks with him; Tyler says "I have only six groats in the world and they must soon by law be taken from me". Hob bursts out "Curse on these taxes—one succeeds another"; "our ministers" "force away our boys" to "feed the crows of France". Tyler is very sad over the prospects of his daughter Alice and her betrothed Piers; the tax-gatherers enter and one of them lays hold of the girl; Wat brains him; and a mob gathers crying "Liberty, No poll tax, No war." In the second act the people are massed on Blackheath and sing their socialistic song of revolt; the priest John Ball addresses them, and tells them of "The Son of God" "humble in mien, lowly in heart", preaching woe to the rich;

> "Ye are all equal, nature made ye so;
> Equality is your birthright".

But they are to remember mercy; and show their oppressors that they "excel them in humanity". In its third scene at Smithfield Tyler speaks up boldly to the king (Richard the Second), and is stabbed from behind by Walworth, Mayor of London. The third act depicts the ruthless and dastardly cruelty of the revenge for the rising. Tyler and Ball are painted as the most manly, upright, and independent

characters in the play. There seems in fact far less departure from historical truth than in Shakespeare's Jack Cade scenes in Henry the Sixth. Why Southey should have been ashamed of this attempt to represent history faithfully it is difficult to say; the extremes to which leaders of popular revolt are forced in their speeches are well and dramatically put by him; and why should he regret having also given one or two of them humane sentiments? These belong naturally to the more enlightened of the oppressed, whilst oppressors take fierce revenge on their revolted subjects as we know from history they did in this case.

7. His "English Eclogues" contain far more candid statement and picture of the woes of the poor and the sins of the rich than this much-blamed dramatic sketch, whilst their dates spread from 1797 to 1803, and yet they are included in his works without one word of explanation or apology. They are true products of the new demand for simplicity of theme, treatment, and diction that brought into existence the Lake school. In his 1799 preface to some of them he says that he was induced to write them by the description of the German idylls given him by William Taylor of Norwich; they bear "no resemblance to any poems in our language"; they are, in fact, an attempt to strip the pastoral of its unreality. In their eagerness of reaction they fall, like so many of Wordsworth's ballads of humble life, into the opposite extreme of commonplaceness that comes close on bathos. Most of them are in the form of dialogue. And it was one of these "The Sailor's Mother" that Canning was chiefly thinking of in his famous parody of Southey's Sapphics— "The Friend of Humanity and the Knife-grinder". A "Traveller" and a "Woman" have a talk over the fate of her boy, who for trapping hares had been sent into the navy and was now returning maimed and blinded by some explosive missile in an engagement with the French; she is querulous and will not be comforted; he pleads the generosity of the country; it ends with her despairing prayer for rest in death. With its plain language and unadorned style it gives a painful impression of the miseries of the poor. The others are also pessimistic over the state of the poor, especially Hannah, and The Ruined

Cottage, two stories of seduction, and The Wedding, a doleful conversation between a "Woman" and a "Traveller" over the struggle and misery that wedding amongst the lowly meant, an eclogue full of Malthusianism. "The Witch" vividly depicts the cruelty to the old induced amongst the farmers and artisans by superstition. The Old Mansion House and The Last of the Family show the changing relationships between the land-owners and their retainers. The Alderman's Funeral is a keen satire on the ostentation of charity by wealth and its real harshness.

8. He had appeared as an author before his Joan of Arc was published; a little volume of poems by Robert Lovell and himself had come out at Bath at the close of 1794. Another volume of minor poems came out at Bristol in 1797, and a third volume at Bristol in 1799. Joan of Arc meantime went through three editions; the later poems passed into a second edition. He had also begun to send short poems to The Morning Post, and in 1799 and 1800 he edited an Annual Anthology to which he contributed some of his best ballads. In 1805 he collected these ballads and poems in a volume called "Metrical Tales and other poems."

9. It was the necessity of brevity and vividness in contributions to journals that drove him into the best and most popular poetic work that he ever did. He had studied Percy's Reliques with great enthusiasm and he adapted the ballad style to the tastes of his day almost as well as Coleridge and with far more success than Wordsworth. It is by his ballads that his name will live. The best known are Mary the Maid of the Inn, a tale of horror at the discovery of her lover as a murderer, The Inchcape Rock, describing the wreck and punishment of a sea-rover for the removal of a warning bell from the rock, and The Battle of Blenheim, a Wordsworthian study of rustic irony over the cruelty and futility of war. Next to these in success come the Well of St. Keyne, a piece of comedy about the struggle for mastery between husband and wife, and God's Judgment on a Wicked Bishop, a version of the tale of the niggardly Bishop Hatto and the rats that ate him. His Spanish Ballads are all but The Lover's Rock in irregular stanzas;

the best are Garci, Ferrandez, and King Ramiro, tales of fierce revenge for breaches of the marriage bond. But like Coleridge it was with the supernatural that he could deal best in ballad form, sometimes in tragic, sometimes in humorous mood. Of the latter the best are The Pious Painter a story of the revenge of Beelzebub on a painter for a truthful though somewhat repulsive portrait of "the Wicked One" painted by him above the church door, Cornelius Agrippa the story of a young man who would meddle with his master's unlawful books, King Charlemain the story of the effect of a charm in attaching the affections of the emperor first to a harlot and next to a wizened old archbishop, St. Romuald the story of a holy and dirty hermit who left his cave because the people of the locality wished to strangle him and so hurry on and make sure of his saintship, The Old Woman of Berkeley a tale of the devil securing her corpse in spite of all her precautions to prevent him, and The Surgeon's Warning a modern version of the same story with resurrectionists instead of Satan. But his most effective are his serious ballads of the supernatural, Rudiger a version of the story of Lohengrin, a knight who came drawn by a swan and after many years of domestic happiness vanished drawn by the same swan, Lord William a story of the vengeance brought on a murderer by the ghost of his drowned victim, and Donica a story of a maiden possessed by a demon and kept alive by it till at the altar about to be wedded it fled and she fell into dust.

10. Other sections of his early poems were Sonnets concerning the Slave Trade, Botany-Bay Eclogues dealing in dramatic dialogue with the sad romance of convict life and the trivial crimes that led to it, Monodramas (Sappho, Ximalpoca, The Wife of Fergus, Lucretia, and La Caba) giving in monologue the emotions of heroes and heroines before committing suicide, and anticipating the method of Browning's dramatic lyrics, The Amatory Poems of Abel Shufflebottom, consisting of sonnets and love elegies that parody the amorous trifles of the time, Songs of the American Indians in irregular lines and stanzas like Thalaba, Occasional Pieces and Nondescripts chiefly short poems in blank verse written on some special occasion. The Retrospect, in

rhymed couplets and a clear imitation of Goldsmith and Gray's Elegy, and the Hymn to the Penates, a blank verse effort on the love of home and hearth in the style of Akenside, were the longest poems of his first volume of 1794. His Inscriptions, short blank verse poems of from a dozen to a score of lines, contain some good nature-poetry, and in the earlier ones some fine sympathy with patriots and lovers of freedom and some fine invective against "the wicked rulers of mankind"; but they are marred like so many of his poems by his didacticism, his irrepressible passion for drawing a moral. This moralising spirit rises to a climax in the section which he calls Lyric Poems. Some of them are addressed to abstractions, Horror, Contemplation (this full of beautiful pictures of nature), and Remembrance, in the style of Collins. Others like The Soldier's Wife, The Widow, To Hymen, To Recovery, are in unrhymed stanzas of four lines suggested by Collins's Ode to Evening, and by the choruses in "Dramatic Sketches of Modern Mythology" by a Dr. Sayers of Norwich. Another set of them, To a Friend, The Chapel Bell, The Holly Tree, are evidently studies of Gray and though concrete in method have their moral inserted. The Chapel Bell, and Written on Sunday Morning, are filled with the spirit of revolt against the religious ceremonies of Oxford.

> "Better to lie and dose than gape amain,
> Hearing still mumbled o'er the same eternal strain".

He loves "the bell that calls the poor to prayer", and "the minster curfew's sullen voice"; but this "memorial of monastic gall" he hates, and "the prayer that trembles on a yawn to heaven" and

> "The snuffling, snaffling Fellow's nasal tone,
> And Romish rites retained, though Romish faith be flown";
> "Go thou and seek the House of Prayer!
> I to the woodlands wend, and there
> In lovely Nature see the God of Love.
> The swelling organ's peal
> Wakes not my soul to zeal
> Like the sweet music of the vernal grove".

It is in this section that the Wordsworthian dialogue between Father William and the young man so open to parody occurs; it is called The Old Man's Comforts. That he was by no means unconscious of the bathos on whose verge he

and the Lake school so often ventured is clear from such poems as "Gooseberry Pie, A Pindaric Ode" and "To a Spider".

11. But he had nothing of that concentrated power of passion and melody which produces the true lyric; he was altogether too fluent both in rhyme and without it to produce anything that could appeal to the emotions of all ages. He had too much learning to think of sacrificing it to single brief touches of imagination. He could not rest long enough on any thought or any sensuous impression or vigorous emotion to give it the form that might be final for many centuries. At best he was a master of simple clear narrative whether in the longer form of epic or in the briefer form of ballad. There were no such melodious felicities in his expressions as to make him a better writer of poetry than of prose. He had ever elevating ideals; but he was too anxious to impress them upon his readers to be other than a preacher or moralist. He had the Lake school's revolutionism; but when it vanished it left his poetic faculty barren and unillumined. He had their sympathy with the lowly and with the oppressed; but it had too little passion and too little humour to keep it long as an idealising, sublimating principle. He had their love of nature and of the spirit that lived in it; but with him it never became a faith that opened vistas into the spiritual world beyond; his insights are not glances into the Infinite. He at last settled into the conviction that prose was his mission as well as his trade.

12. The same slow transference of the imagination from poetry to prose by the evanescence of revolutionary passion took place in one whose influence he acknowledged—Walter Savage Landor. Born in 1775, with an ebullient nature that is not very much exaggerated by Dickens in Boythorn in his Bleak House, it was natural that the contagion of the French Revolution should seize him. The most receptive period and the period most inclined to revolt against the past, the exit from boyhood, in his life was contemporaneous with its ferment. And both in his home and at school his passionate independence brought him into much trouble. Washington became one of his boyish heroes, and the American struggle for independence

drew his warmest sympathies. He represented to his friends with the explosive candour that ever distinguished him his full approval of the excesses in Paris and his longing for the guillotine in London for George the Third and the dignitaries of the church. At Rugby his rebellious spirit brought him into conflict with his master over a false quantity, and he had to leave the school at sixteen and went into the house of a private tutor. At eighteen he entered Trinity College, Oxford, and at once got the name of the "mad Jacobin". He had not been long there before his defiance of authorities led to his rustication. Going home, he quarrelled with his father over his conduct in this affair, and he shook the dust of his home in Warwick off his feet. He settled in London in 1794, and by the intervention of friends had the quarrel patched up and an allowance of £150 made him. With this he returned to Wales where he spent the next three years. During the last years of the century he shifted about from place to place, now in Wales, again at Bath, sometimes in Warwick, sometimes in London. He was never and could never be at rest.

13. Republicanism and verse were the first instinct of such a temperament, and, though he never wholly abandoned either, he came soon to hate and scorn the French, and he failed to achieve anything in the latter. Bold and passionate as his revolutionism was, it never amalgamated with his poetic spirit. In his first publication "The Poems of Walter Savage Landor, London, 1795" there are some evidences of his opinions, an Ode to Washington, and a piece called French Villagers, and his second also belonging to that year was an anonymous satire against Pitt; but the new spirit has little to do with the atmosphere of his verse taken as a whole. His literary faculty was long dominated by the eighteenth century, and by his classicism, which he substituted for its pseudo-classicism. It was Dryden, Pope, Gray, that were his models in his earlier poems, when he did not prefer Latin to English. In his first volume most of the pieces are in the heroic couplet, and the themes are evidently inspired by the Queen Anne age, The Birth of Poesie, An

Apology for Satire, Pyramus and Thisbe, An Epistle from Abelard to Eloisa. His contemporary themes have a more modern dress; his Ode to Washington is in the manner of Gray, and his French Villagers is in a four-lined stanza. But his anonymous satire, A Moral Epistle, is a manifest imitation of Pope. There were also in his earlier volume a large number of Latin pieces of verse and a Latin piece of prose defending the continued use of the classical tongue as a medium of expression. The English Epigrams in the book were partly inspired by Martial, partly by the Queen Anne age.

14. Afterwards he changed his allegiance. "My prejudices in favour of ancient literature began to wear away on reading Paradise Lost". Blank verse drove out his love of the heroic couplet and the ode, and his poetry became thereafter more epic on the one hand and more lyrical on the other. Yet even to his last days he occasionally used the favourite verse of Pope, and the octosyllabic verse of Swift was not unusual with him. His greatest effort and longest poem, Gebir, the product of his Welsh period, is in blank verse. It was printed and published in Warwick in 1798, the year of the appearance of the first volume of Lyrical Ballads. He had also been strongly stirred in Wales by three different passions, one for Rose Aylmer whom he names in some of his brief lyrics, another for a Miss Jones whose name appears in his lyrics as Ione, and a more lasting one for a Miss Sophia Jane Swift afterwards Countess of Molande and later Duchess of Luxembourg; the second name of this lady he poetised into Ianthe, and this word is liberally sprinkled over his amorous and fanciful lyrics. For the ever-varying metres and styles of the third decade of his life it is evident that he studied Elizabethan songs; yet none of them have that spontaneous melody or that natural grace which belongs to the best of these only half-artificial bursts of music; his zigzagging passions lead him into abrupt changes of thought and expression; the warmth of his feeling is more apparent than its naturalness; placed beside any one of Burns's or Shelley's, these, two of the best, appear artificial and spasmodic, if not prosaic;—

"Thou hast not raised, Ianthe, such desire
In any breast as thou hast raised in mine.
No wandering meteor now, no marshy fire,
Leads on my steps, but lofty, but divine.
And if thou chillest me as chill thou dost,
When I approach too near, too boldly gaze,
So chills the blushing morn, so chills the host
Of vernal stars, with light more chaste than day's."

"Soon as Ianthe's lip I prest,
Thither my spirit winged its way;
Ah, there the wanton would not rest!
Ah, there the wanderer could not stay!"

He was, in fact, too imitative to give his feelings new and natural expression. His latest studies always guided his somewhat reluctant utterance. Towards the close of the century he had come across the translations of Sir William Jones and Dr. Nott from the Arabic and the Persian, and in 1800 he published in pamphlet "Poems from the Arabic and the Persian"; they are not translations but imitations of translations. His great admiration for Pindar similarly affected the volume of poetry which he issued in 1802, containing Chrysaor and The Phocaeans, two blank verse narrative poems, as it had already tinged the Miltonism of his Gebir with abruptness and obscurity; the volume also contained some of his love lyrics. In 1804 he read Herbert's translations from the Icelandic, and immediately he issued his Gunlaug, a narrative of the loves of the hero and Helga, in octosyllabic couplets. It is the least obscure of all his longer poems, and tells the story more in the manner of Scott, though it was published the year before the first of Scott's poems, The Lay of the Last Minstrel. After betrothal the hero goes off on a three years' war expedition; the father of the heroine forces her to marry Rafen the friend of Gunlaug on the very day of his return; the two fight a duel and in spite of the treachery of Rafen he is slain by the true-hearted warrior and lover. There is in this poem Landor's closest approach to the nature-school of poets; there is sympathetic insight into nature and the hero loves all living things; even the dormouse is dear to him, "tamest of hearts that beat on wilds", "docile the day it's caught".

" All living things are ministers
To him, whose hand attunes the spheres
And guides a thousand worlds, and binds
(Work for ten godheads) female minds ! "

15. But it was Gebir by which he seems to have desired to be known as a poet. For he wrote it with the greatest care, passages of it first in Latin and then in English ; and in 1802 he revised it with as great care, and along with his brother added in a new edition of it elaborate notes ; nay, he made a Latin translation of it in order to recommend it to the scholarly audience of London critics and parliament men. And before he first published it he had reduced it to half its size, striving after condensation of narrative. He had found the story in a collection of tales by Clara Reeve and was attracted by its Eastern atmosphere and the opportunity of painting a hero. Gebir, Moorish prince of Spain, makes war upon Charoba Queen of Egypt ; but Dalica her nurse, a sorceress, advises her to go to him and get him to rebuild the city in Egypt once built by his ancestor ; the interview touches the hearts of both ; his eyes

" Showed if they had not, that they might have lov'd ;
For there was pity in them at that hour ".

He went to consult his shepherd brother Tamar, and, finding that he had fallen in love with a nymph, pities him, and yet tells of his own love ; he determines, therefore, to accept the challenge and rebuild the city. But when the army has worked six days at the restoration, all their work is undone again by some magic. Gebir, therefore, disguises himself as his brother Tamar and meeting the nymph defeats her in a wrestling bout ; she tells him the rites by which he will be able to overcome the magic. He performs them ; and at the conclusion a black abyss opens, and the spirit of his ancestor, Aroar, leads him down into the world below ; he sees his ancestors afar ; one of them, strange to say, in the likeness of George the Third, "a wretch " " with eyebrows white and slanting brow ", and another in that of the beheaded king of France who, " bound down supine ", " shrinks yelling from sword there engine-hung ", and a third in that of Charles the Second " who sold his people to a rival king ", to " the harp's gay simpering air ". His own father's spirit regrets that he had exacted a vow from him to

avenge him on Egypt. Aroar tells him of the punishment of those "who tortured law to silence or to speech as pleased themselves", and those "who lov'd their country for the spoils it gave". Then the hero returns to earth. But Dalica knows all, and, thinking to protect her country from the foreigner, gets a poisoned robe from her sister, and, when the nuptials between her mistress and Gebir are being performed, presents him with it. He dies of the venom in the arms of Charoba. Tamar and his nymph are wedded and journey far along the Mediterranean.

16. There is no attempt made to render the story easy for the reader; the transitions are abrupt, the purpose of each episode or incident far from clear; he seems often to be emulating Pindar in his obscurity and his love of the poetry of sounding names; perhaps too, he is following Shakespeare in the concentrated energy of his later diction; for in the third book he says he "drank of Avon", "a dangerous draught that roused within the feverish thirst of song". In this book too he is thinking of Dante and his Inferno, as he describes Gebir's descent into Hades; he begins to long for the spirit of that

> "matchless man,
> Whom Nature led throughout her whole domain,
> While he embodied breath'd ethereal air".

Many of his references are most obscure and his neologisms are not always happy or even necessary; the "laminous length" of the pavement, "her scient hand", "with libant lip", "steps once warm with frequentation", "disregardful of the sympathies" are excrescences; so too are many of his forced classical constructions, his double epithets like "that fierce frightful man" and "extravagant enormous apertures", and his alliterative lines like "rose from a river rolling in its bed", and "Phlegethon formed a fiery firmament"; and some of his similes and metaphors are strained and unnatural, as "touching the very eye-ball of the heart". But there is genuine poetry throughout numberless passages and some of the phrases and lines reveal almost Shakespearean power of expression; humility "a tattered cloak that pride wears when deform'd"; Charoba was "wretched up to royalty";

"When on the pausing theatre of earth
Eve's shadowy curtain falls, can any man
Bring back the far-off intercepted hills!"
"The brave
When they no longer doubt, no longer fear";
"Compassion can be but where passions are";
"Grief favours all who bring the gift of tears";
"The heron,
Rising with hurried croak and throat outstretch't,
Ploughs up the silvering surface of her plain";
"There is no world to those that grieve and love";
"In the too tender and once tortured heart
Doubts gather strength from habit, like disease;
Fears, like the needle verging to the pole,
Tremble and tremble into certainty";
"From our own wisdom less is to be reapt
Than from the barest folly of our friend";
"Above rose Ithaca
Like a blue bubble floating in the bay";
"Twilight broods here, lull'd by no nightingale,
Nor waken'd by the shrill lark dewy-wing'd";
"Love's column ros
Marmoreal, trophied round with golden hair";
"Who unclosed
Those faded eyes and fill'd them from the stars?"

Dalica describes Charoba's childhood in language of great beauty and power; "she thought the crown a play-thing to amuse, Herself, and not the people", and when she "watcht grave elders look with awe On such a bauble",

"She was afraid her parents should suspect
They had caught childhood from her in a kiss";

she had great courage and high thought, and, when she saw the ocean first, she cried,

"Is this the mighty ocean! Is this all!";

she had lost this wondrous soul,

"Soul discontented with capacity".

17. Landor's passionate revolutionism seldom breaks through the cold sculpturesque outlines of the poem. The third book with its visit to hell gives clearest expression to it; he pictures monarchs and statesmen as tortured; in the other books only an occasional touch shows this phase of his beliefs, the portrait of Charoba in childhood toying with the sceptre and crown, mere baubles to the eye of truth, the taunt in the second book to "mighty men" to "invade far cities" and get as the treasure for their heirs only serpents,

and the beginning of the seventh book with its references to mortal's "trampled by tyranny or scoff't by scorn", its warning "man, spare thy kind", and its allusion to Rousseau's dream of a golden age ;—

> "Many still bend their beauteous heads unblest,
> And sigh aloud for elemental man".

But there is little evidence of the strength of his opinions in the frame-work of the poem. One of the peculiarities of Landor is that his revolutionism and his wild indignation against despotism instead of passing away with the French Revolution grow more pronounced and appear more clearly in his productions as he grows older. In Chrysaor, written in 1801, and afterwards included in his Hellenics, he speaks out with fierceness against the "peace-embracing, war-inciting king" of "fair Hesperia," evidently George the Third, and against all kings and superstitions "the pest of men below and curse of gods above", "Religion's helm assuming".

> "Hers are the last worst tortures, they inflict
> On all who bend to any king but them".

The piece that follows this in the Hellenics, originally called Regeneration and written some thirty years after, is bolder still in its adoration of freedom. He addresses England ;—

> "Thou recreant slave,
> That sittest afar off and helpest not,
> O thou degenerate Albion! with what shame
> Do I survey thee, pushing forth the sponge
> At thy spear's length in mockery at the thirst
> Of holy Freedom in his agony,
> And prompt and keen to pierce the wounded side!"

With Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth the wild passion, that came to them from the very atmosphere of the last decade of last century, turned round into its opposite, as strong conservatism ; Landor had it by nature rather than from his surroundings ; he was born a rebel and worshipper of freedom.

**18.** This perhaps may account partly for the statuesque coldness of his poetry, and especially his early poetry ; the ferment without seemed to him nothing exceptional, but a part of that which was within him. These other poets, by nature conservative, felt in their first youth as if the world

was getting upheaved and some great age was about to be born. The defeat of their hopes, the fall of the Girondins, and the rise of the Napoleonic tyranny threw them back upon themselves, and all seemed commonplace again. Landor felt the dull, sullen atmosphere of revolution and freedom and hope suppressed to be what was unnatural, and his true inspiration came when his fiery disposition chafed against the re-soldered fetters. He threw off his chastely classical poetic form and adopted prose dialogue as best suited to the quick interchange of mood and thought that was his nature. He abandoned the epic for the dramatic; the abrupt transitions of his mind marred his narrative; the give and take of dialogue was what his temperament demanded. He passed from poem to dramatic scene in blank verse, and thence into the prose of his Imaginary Conversations, the work by which he will live. This transition was not merely the development of his own genius; it was a part of the evolution of English literature. The literary drama took strong hold of English poets during the first half of our century; and by degrees it passed into the poetic novel and gave way to it. This natural bond between drama and fiction was the outcome of the conditions of the earlier period, that of preparation, the latter half of last century.

**19.** Thus fifty years of poetical experiment had prepared the way, not only for a new outburst of poetry, but for a nobler and more varied prose. It seemed as though the prosaic spirit of Queen Anne prose had mastered verse; but a new era dawned for both in the renaissance of the people, and the resurgence of national feeling. Many poets still found their model in Pope; but they had to clothe him in "worsted stockings", or recreate him with the breath of a new sentiment. Others attempted to revive the sublimities of Paradise Lost; but the intellectualism of the time killed the blank verse. Some sought the Elizabethan age, and thought that the archaistic style of Spenser was needed; they found it but a passing fashion. So did those who went still farther back to Chaucer and his predecessors in their attempt to clothe the new passion for the old in the garments of the dead. It was the ballad simplicity of

Percy's Reliques that pointed the true way; the people had brought with them through the period of obscuration their taste for this; and Blake and Burns, Wordsworth and Coleridge adapted it to the new ideas and the new times. It was the Biblical splendours and the poetic prose of Ossian that pointed still more surely to the coming time. The people had acquired in their march through the night a strong taste for such prose as is to be found in the Authorised Version. And Macpherson had secularised it and given it a modern and British tinge, that fascinated the new audience, in spite of the Celtic tinsel with which he bespangled it. And imagination finds a wider field and audience in prose fiction than in poetry. The lyric is the only form that seems strong enough to assert its superiority and naturalness; for it has an invincible ally in music. Epic, idyll, drama, satire, have an almost artificial air now, when put into verse. Thus both for poetry and prose did its poetry make the latter half of last century a period of preparation.

# BIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX.

# BIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX.

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE. | WRITINGS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| SAMUEL JOHNSON 1709—1784 | Born at Lichfield, the son of a bookseller. | 1709 | |
| | Sent to various schools. Entered, as a commoner, Pembroke College, Oxford. | 1728 | Latin translation of Pope's Messiah. |
| | Returned home, without a degree; death of his father. | 1731 | |
| | Usher at Market-Bosworth; journalist at Birmingham; married the widow of a mercer, and set up a school. | 1731—37 | The greater part of Irene, a tragedy, written. |
| | | 1735 | Abridgment and translation of Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia. |
| | Set out for London accompanied by his pupil David Garrick. At first suffered bitter distress; led the life of a literary hack. | 1737 | |
| | | 1737—62 | |
| | | 1738 | Part of a translation of Father Paul Sarpi's History of the Council of Trent. London—a poetical satire. |
| | | 1738—48 | Numerous contributions to The Gentleman's Magazine: prefaces, biographies, translations, essays, Parliamentary Reports (1740—42—43). |
| | | 1739 | A Complete Vindication of the Licenser of the Stage from the malicious and |

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| | | scandalous aspersions of Mr. Brookes, author of Gustavus Vasa. Marmor Norfolciense: or an essay on an ancient prophetical inscription in monkish rhyme, lately discovered near Lynne in Norfolk: by Probus Britannicus. |
| | 1743 | Dedication to Dr. Mead of Dr. James' Medicinal Dictionary. |
| | 1744 | Life of Richard Savage. Preface to the Harleian Miscellany. |
| | 1745 | Miscellaneous observations on the tragedy of Macbeth with remarks on Sir T. H.'s (Sir Thomas Hanmer's) edition of Shakespeare, and proposals for a new edition of that poet. |
| | 1747 | Plan for a dictionary of the English Language, addressed to Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield. |
| | 1748 | Preface and Vision of Theodore the Hermit in Dodsley's Preceptor. |
| | 1749 | The Vanity of Human Wishes—a poetical satire. |
| | | Irene produced. |
| | March 1750<br>March 1752 | The Rambler—periodical essays. |
| | 1750 | An Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns in his Paradise Lost. |
| | 1751 | Life of Cheynel in The Student. |
| Death of his wife. | 1752 | |
| | 1753 | Papers in the Adventurer. |

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE. | WRITINGS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| SAMUEL JOHNSON *—continued* | | 1754 | Life of Edward Cave in The Gentleman's Magazine. |
| | The University of Oxford granted him the degree of M.A. | 1755 | A Dictionary with a Grammar and History of the English Language. An Account of an attempt to ascertain the Longitude at Sea by an Exact Theory of the Variations of the Magnetical Needle |
| | | 1756 | An Abridgment of the Dictionary. Several essays in The Universal Visitor. Life of Sir Thomas Browne. Essays and reviews in The Literary Magazine or Universal Review. |
| | | 1757 | Speech on the subject of an address to the Throne after the Expedition to Rochefort (printed 1785). Review of Soame Jenyns' Free Enquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil, in The Literary Magazine. |
| | | April 5, 1758<br>April 5, 1760 | The Idler—periodical essays. |
| | Death of his mother. | 1759 | Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia ; a tale. A Dissertation on Greek Comedy. |
| | | 1760 | Address of the Painters to George III, on his Accession to the Throne. |
| | | 1761 | Preface to Rolt's Dictionary of Trade and Commerce. |

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| Pecuniary troubles ceased with him; ranked as the literary and social king of the time: exercised much benevolence in private life. | 1762—84 | |
| Received a pension of £300 a year. | 1762 | |
| | 1763 | A Character of Collins. Life of Ascham. Dedications and Reviews. Account of the Detection of the Imposture of the Cock-lane Ghost. |
| Became acquainted with Boswell. Founded his famous "Literary Club"; the original members were Johnson, Reynolds, Burke, Goldsmith, Beauclerk, Langton, Sir John Hawkins and Dr. Nugent. | | |
| | 1764 | Reviews of The Sugar-Cane, and of The Traveller. |
| Introduced into the family of Mr. Thrale. Trinity College, Dublin, conferred the degree of LL.D. on him. | 1765 | The Plays of William Shakespeare with Notes. |
| | 1766 | The Fountains—a Fairy Tale. |
| | 1770 | The False Alarm—a political pamphlet. |
| | 1771 | Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands. |
| Visited the Hebrides. | 1773 | |
| | 1774 | The Patriot—a political pamphlet. |
| Visited France with the Thrales. | 1775 | A Journey to the Western Highlands of Scotland. |
| | | Taxation no Tyranny: an Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress. |
| | 1781 | Lives of the English Poets. |
| | 1782 | Part of Shaw's Paper denying the authenticity of Macpherson's Ossian. |

| Name. | Biographical Details. | Date. | Writings. |
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| Samuel Johnson *—continued* | | Various years | Letters to Mrs. Thrale. Prayers and Meditations. |
| | Died at Johnson's Court, Fleet Street | Dec. 1784 | |
| Oliver Goldsmith 1728—1774 | Born at Pallas, Longford, where his father was clergyman. | Nov. 1728 | |
| | Family removed to Lissoy in West Meath. Went to school there to "Paddy Byrne", and at Elphinstone, Athlone and Edgeworthstown. Disfigured by small pox. | 1730<br>1737 | |
| | Admitted sizar Trinity College, Dublin | 1745 | |
| | B.A.; left Dublin. | 1747<br>1749 | Ballads for the Dublin street singers. |
| | At home; then tutor; studied medicine at Edinburgh; | 1752—54 | |
| | and at Leyden. | 1754 | |
| | Made a roving tour through Europe visiting Louvain, Antwerp, Brussels, Maestricht, France, Switzerland, Italy, and returning through France. | 1755—56 | |
| | Reached London where he was successively usher, druggist's assistant, physician, reader for the press to Richardson and usher in a boarding school. | 1756 | |
| | Engaged by Griffiths to write for The Monthly Review. | 1757 | |
| | Applied unsuccessfully for a medical | | |

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| appointment in the army or navy. | 1758 | Hack work in The Monthly Review, The Critical Review and The Literary Magazine. Translation of a French novel and Memoirs of a Protestant condemned to the Galleys of France for his Religion. |
| | 1759 | An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe. The Bee—weekly essays, eight numbers. Contributions to The Lady's Magazine, and to Pottinger's Busy-Body. |
| | 1760—2 | Essays and criticisms in Smollett's British Magazine. |
| | 1760 | The Chinese Letters forming The Citizen of the World in The Public Ledger—complete 1762. |
| Became intimate with Johnson; thenceforth a conspicuous member of the Johnsonian circle. | 1761 | Life of Voltaire in The Lady's Magazine. |
| | 1760—3 | Compilations, pamphlets, revisions, prefaces, abridgments, translations, for Newbery the publisher. |
| | 1762 | The Life of Richard Nash, Esq. |
| | 1764 | History of England in a series of letters from a nobleman to his son. |
| Member of Johnson's Literary Club | 1763 | |
| Sold the M.S. of the Vicar of Wakefield to free himself from imprisonment for debt. | 1764 | The Traveller; or a Prospect of Society: a poem. The Captivity in Babylon; an oratorio. Edwin and Angelina — a ballad. |
| | 1765 | Essays—a selection. A Survey of Experimental Philosophy. A Short English Grammar. History of Philosophy, from |

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE. | WRITINGS. |
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| OLIVER GOLDSMITH *--continued* | | | the French. Poems for Young Ladies—a collection. Beauties of English Poetry—a collection. Goody Two-Shoes (?) |
| | | 1766 | The Vicar of Wakefield ; a Tale : supposed to be written by himself. |
| | | 1768 | The Good Natured Man — comedy—produced. Contributions to The Gentleman's Magazine and to The Westminster Magazine. |
| | | 1769 | Roman History. |
| | Six weeks' visit to France. | 1770 | Life of Parnell. Life of Bolingbroke. The History of the Earth and Animated Nature, begun. The Deserted Village—a poem. |
| | | 1771 | A History of England. The Haunch of Venison ; A Poetical Epistle to Lord Clare written. |
| | | 1772 | An abridgment of the Roman History. Threnodia Augustalis |
| | His improvidence brought upon him difficulties that now reached a crisis. | 1773 | A History of Greece begun. Translation of Scarron's Comic Romance. She Stoops to Conquer ; or The Mistakes of a Night—comedy—produced. |
| | Mental distress and self-doctoring aggravated a disease that caused his death. | 1774<br>4 April, 1774 | Retaliation—a poem —written. |
| GEORGE CRABBE 1754—1832 | Born at Aldborough, Suffolk ; of humble parentage ; apprenticed to a surgeon at Wickham Brook, and afterwards at | 1754 | |

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| Woodbridge where he wrote youthful verses. | | |
| | | Hope—a prize poem in The Lady's Magazine. |
| | 1775 | Inebriety—a poem. |
| Came to London as a literary adventurer Befriended by Burke who introduced him to Reynolds, Johnson and Fox. | 1778 | |
| | 1779 | The Candidate—a poetical epistle to the authors of The Monthly Review. |
| Ordained priest. Curate of Aldborough. | 1781 | The Library—a poem. |
| | 1783 | The Village (revised by Dr. Johnson). |
| Curate of Stathern. | 1785 | The Newspaper—a poem. |
| Curate of Muston, Leicester. | 1789 | |
| | 1807 | The Parish Register—poem. Sir Eustace Grey, and other poems. |
| | 1810 | The Borough—poem. |
| | 1812 | Tales in Verse. |
| Rector of Trowbridge, Wiltshire. Spent the remainder of his life engaged chiefly in domestic and clerical duties. | 1814 | |
| | 1817 | Variation of Public Opinion as it respects Religion. |
| | 1819 | Tales of the Hall—in verse. |
| | Various dates | Essay on the Natural History of the Vale of Belvoir. Funeral Sermon on the Duke of Rutland. Essay on Botany. Various poems and three novels—burnt by the author. |
| Died. | 1832 | |
| | 1834 | Complete Poetical Works. |
| | 1840 | Outlines of Natural Theology. |
| | 1850 | Posthumous Sermons. |

| Name. | Biographical Details. | Date. | Writings. |
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| THOMAS CAMPBELL 1777—1844 | Born at Glasgow; younger son of a merchant; educated at Glasgow University where he supported himself by private teaching. Went to Edinburgh where he mixed freely with men like Scott, Jeffrey, Grahame, Dr. Brown, Brougham. | 1777 | |
| | Visited the Continent where he led a wretched life, and wrote fugitive pieces to London journals. | 1797<br>1799 | The Pleasures of Hope—poem. |
| | Returned to London. | 1803 | Poems—including Hohenlinden; Ye Mariners of England; The Exile of Erin; Lochiel's Warning. |
| | Received a yearly pension of £200 from the government. | 1805 | Articles in The Edinburgh Encyclopaedia |
| | | 1806 | Annals of Great Britain from the Accession of George III. to the Peace of Amiens. |
| | | 1809 | Gertrude of Wyoming, with The Battle of the Baltic, Lord Ullin's Daughter and O'Connor's Child. |
| | Visited Germany. | | |
| | | 1819—41<br>—45—48 | Specimens of the British Poets with Biographical and Critical Notices, and an Essay on English Poetry. |
| | | 1820—30 | Edited The New Monthly Magazine. |
| | | 1824 | Theodoric—a domestic tale—in verse. |

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| | Elected Rector Glasgow University. | 1826 | |
| | | 1831 | Established The Metropolitan Magazine. |
| | Visited Algiers. | 1832 | |
| | | 1834 | Life of Mrs. Siddons. |
| | | 1837 | Letters from the South—an account of Algiers. |
| | | 1841 | The Life and Times of Petrarch. |
| | | 1842 | The Pilgrim of Glencoe, and other poems. |
| | | 1843 | Frederick the Great—his Court and Times. |
| | Died at Boulogne. | 1844 | |
| | | 1845 | A Poet's Residence in Algiers. |
| | | 1849 | Letters—edited by Dr. Beattie. |
| ROBERT BLOOMFIELD 1766—1823 | Born at Honington, Suffolk, youngest son of a tailor. His father died, and his mother set up a little school. | 1766 | |
| | Served as a farmer's boy; then went to London where he became a shoemaker. | 1777 | |
| | | 1800 | The Farmer's Boy—poem (translated into German 1801, French, Italian and Latin 1805). |
| | | 1802 | Rural Tales and Ballads. |
| | | 1804 | Good Tidings or News from the Farm. |
| | Still followed his trade as ladies' shoemaker and dealer in Aeolian harps; but the demands of his poor relations brought financial difficulties upon him. He retired to Shefford, Bedfordshire, where he died. | 1806 | Wild Flowers. Miscellaneous Poems. |
| | | 1811 | The Banks of the Wye. |
| | | 1814 | Works—complete. |
| | | 1822 | May Day with the Muses. |
| | | 1823 | |
| | | 1824 | Remains in Poetry and Prose. |
| | | 1871 | Correspondence—selected. |

| Name. | Biographical Details. | Date. | Writings. |
|---|---|---|---|
| SAMUEL ROGERS 1763—1855 | Born at London. | 1763 | |
| | Educated at a Nonconformist school. Frequent intercourse with Dr. Price influenced him to a marked degree. Settled as a banker in London. | | |
| | | 1781 | The Scribbler—essays in The Gentlemans' Magazine. |
| | | 1786 | Ode to Superstition and other Poems. |
| | Travelled in France. | 1791 | |
| | | 1792 | The Pleasures of Memory. |
| | | 1798 | An Epistle to a Friend and other Poems. |
| | Retired from his chambers in the Temple to his house in St. James' Place, where he lived in a manner in which "something of the Horace was blended with something of the Maecenas". | 1803 | |
| | | 1812 | Columbus—a fragment. |
| | | 1814 | Jacqueline—a tale in verse. |
| | | 1819 | Human Life—reflective poem. |
| | | 1822 | Italy—poem in heroic verse. |
| | | 1836 | Complete Edition of Works. |
| | Died. | 1855 | |
| | | 1856 | Recollections of the Table Talk of Samuel Rogers, Esq. |
| | | 1859 | Further Recollections—edited by Sharpe. |

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| MARK AKENSIDE 1721—1770 | Born at Newcastle-on-Tyne, son of a butcher. Educated at a Dissenting School, and at Edinburgh University where he entered in | 1721<br><br><br>1739 | |
| | | 1737 | The Virtuoso, and other contributions in Spenser's style and manner to The Gentleman's Magazine. |
| | Studied at Leyden, | 1742—4 | |
| | Physician at Northampton. | 1744 | De Ortu et Incremento Foetus Humani. The Pleasures of the Imagination—a didactic blank verse poem. Epistle to Curio—a satire on Pulteney, Earl of Bath. |
| | | 1745 | Odes on Several Subjects. |
| | Presented with an annuity of £300. Went to live at Hampstead. | 1747 | |
| | | 1748 | Ode to the Earl of Huntingdon. |
| | | 1752 | Essays and Reviews in Dodsley's Museum. |
| | | 1755 | The Gulstonian Lectures, R.C.P. |
| | | 1756 | The Croonian Lectures, R.C.P. |
| | | 1758 | Ode to the Country Gentlemen of England. Pamphlet on Anatomy. |
| | | 1760 | Oratio Anniversaria, etc.—the Harveian oration for 1759. |
| | | 1763 | Account of a Blow on the Heart and its Effects. |
| | | 1764 | De Dysenteria Commentarius. |
| | | 1766 | Ode to Thomas Edwards, Esq., on the late edition of Pope's Works. |
| | | 1767 | Medical Transactions. |
| | Died. | 1770 | |
| | | 1772 | Works. |

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE. | WRITINGS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| EDWARD YOUNG 1684—1765 | Born at Upham in Hampshire. Son of a clergyman; educated at Winchester College and at Oxford. | 1684 | |
| | | 1713 | Epistle to the Rt. Hon. Lord Lansdowne |
| | | | The Last Day, poem in three books |
| | | 1715 | The Force of Religion; or Vanquished Love, poem in two books. |
| | | 1714 | On the Late Queen's death, and His Majesty's Accession to the Throne. |
| | | 1716 | Oratio habita in Coll. Omnium Animarum cum jacta sunt Fundamenta Bibliothecae Chickleio—Codringtonianae. |
| | The degree of D.C.L. conferred upon him. | 1719 | A Paraphrase on the Book of Job |
| | | | Busiris, king of Egypt—a tragedy. |
| | | 1721 | The Revenge—a tragedy. |
| | | 1725—8 | The Universal Passion—seven poetical satires. |
| | | 1726 | The Instalment—occasional poem. |
| | | 1728 | Ocean, an Ode; with a discourse on lyric poetry. Cynthia—an ode on the death of the Marquis of Carnarvon. Ode to the King. |
| | | 1728 | True Estimate of Human Life. The Brothers, a tragedy, written; (published 1753). |
| | Rector of Welwyn, Hertfordshire. | 1729 | An Apology for Princes; or the Reverence due to Government. |

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| | | 1730 | Imperium Pelagi—a naval lyric. Two Poetical Epistles to Mr. Pope concerning the authors of the age. Sea Piece, addressed to Voltaire. |
| | | 1734 | The Foreign Address. |
| | | 1742—5 | The Complaint; or Night Thoughts on Life, Death and Immortality. |
| | | 1745 | The Consolation; to which is annexed some thoughts occasioned by the present juncture. |
| | | 1755 | The Centaur not fabulous; in six letters on the life in vogue. |
| | | 1756 | An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope. |
| | | 1757 | Works. |
| | | 1759 | Conjectures on Original Composition in a letter to the author of Sir Charles Grandison. |
| | Received a court appointment. | 1761 | |
| | | 1762 | Resignation—a poem in two parts. |
| | Died. | 1765 | |
| ROBERT BLAIR 1699—1746 | Born at Edinburgh; educated at the University there. | 1699 | |
| | Travelled on the Continent. | | |
| | Minister at Athelstaneford. | 1731 | |
| | | 1743 | The Grave, a poem. |
| | | various dates | Elegy on the death of his father-in-law. Version of a pious ode of Florentus Holusenus. |
| | Died. | 1746 | |

| Name. | Biographical Details. | Date. | Writings. |
|---|---|---|---|
| JOHN DYER 1700—1758 | Born at Aberglasney in Caermarthenshire. | 1700 | |
| | Educated at Westminster School; studied law. | | |
| | Itinerant painter in Wales. | 1726 | Grongar Hill, poem. |
| | Visited Rome. | 1740 | The Ruins of Rome, descriptive poem. |
| | Afterwards lived the life of a country-clergyman. | 1757 | The Fleece, poem. |
| | Died. | 1758 | |
| | | 1761 | Poetical Works. |
| RICHARD GLOVER 1712—1785 | Born at London. Son of a merchant; received a common school education. | 1712 | |
| | | 1728 | To the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton. |
| | | 1737 | Leonidas, an epic poem (1770—in twelve books). |
| | | 1739 | London, or the Progress of Commerce; a poem. Hosier's Ghost, a ballad. |
| | | 1758 | Boadicea, a tragedy. |
| | Entered Parliament. | 1760 | |
| | | 1761 | Medea, a tragedy. |
| | Died. | 1785 | |
| | | 1787 | The Atheniad, epic poem in thirty books. |
| | | 1799 | Jason. |
| | | 1813 | His Diary published as Memoirs of a distinguished literary and political character, from 1742 to 1757. |

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| JOHN ARMSTRONG 1709—1779 | Born at Castleton, Roxburgh. Son of a clergyman ; studied physic at Edinburgh, where he wrote youthful verses. | 1709 | |
| | | 1735 | An Essay for abridging the study of Physic, a satire. |
| | Settled in London as a physician. | | |
| | | 1737 | The Economy of Love, a poem. |
| | | 1744 | The Art of Preserving Health, a didactic poem. |
| | | 1751 | Benevolence. Day, a poem. |
| | | 1753 | Taste, a poetical epistle. |
| | Physician to the army in Germany. | 1760 | |
| | | 1758 | Sketches by Launcelot Temple. |
| | | 1770 | Miscellanies, containing The Universal Almanac, and The Forced Marriage. |
| | | 1771 | A Short Ramble through France and Italy. |
| | | 1773 | Medical Essays. |
| | Died. | 1779 | |
| JAMES GRAINGER 1723—1767 | Born at Dunse. Educated as a surgeon ; with the army in Germany. Then settled in London, and lastly at St. Christopher's in the West Indies. | 1723 | |
| | | 1758 | Translations of Tibullus and of Sulpicia. |
| | | 1764 | The Sugar Cane, a poem. |
| | Died. | 1767 | |
| WILLIAM FALCONER 1730—1769 | Born. Son of a wig-maker ; became an apprentice, then a second mate in the merchant | 1730 | |

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE. | WRITINGS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| WM. FALCONER —*continued* | navy. Shipwrecked on the coast of Attica. | 1750 | |
| | | 1762 | The Shipwreck—a poem. |
| | Entered the Royal Navy. | 1764 | |
| | | 1765 | The Demagogue—a poetical satire. |
| | Lost at sea. | 1769 | The Universal Marine Dictionary. |
| | | Various dates | Elegy on Frederick, Prince of Wales. The Storm. Short pieces in The Gentleman's Magazine. |
| ERASMUS DARWIN 1731—1802 | Born at Elton near Newark. | 1731 | |
| | Educated at Cambridge, and at Edinburgh where he graduated as M.D. Practised physic at Lichfield. Removed to Derby. | 1781 | |
| | | 1791 | The Botanic Garden—a poem in two books. |
| | | 1794—6 | Zoonomia, or The Laws of Organic Life. |
| | | 1797 | A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools. |
| | | 1799 | Phytologia; or The Philosophy of Agriculture and Gardening. |
| | Died. | 1802 | |
| | | 1803 | The Temple of Nature, or The Origin of Society—a poem. The Shrine of Nature |
| | | 1809 | Works—complete. |
| ANNA SEWARD 1747—1809 | Born at Lichfield. | 1747 | |
| | Daughter of the canon. Enjoyed the | | |

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| | society of Darwin, Day, Edgworth and Dr. Johnson :—the "Swan of Lichfield." | 1782 | Louisa—a poetical novel. |
| | | 1799 | Sonnets. |
| | | 1804 | Life of Dr. Darwin. |
| | Died. | 1809 | |
| | | 1810 | Poems—edited by Sir Walter Scott. |
| | | 1811 | Letters—edited by Constable. |
| THOMAS DAY 1748—1789 | Born at London. | 1748 | |
| | Educated at The Charterhouse and Oxford. £900 a year bequeathed to him. | 1749 | |
| | | 1773 | The Dying Negro—a poem. |
| | Called to the Bar. | 1775 | |
| | Married and settled down as a farmer in Essex and Surrey. | 1778 | |
| | | 1783—89 | The History of Sandford and Merton. |
| | Killed. | 1789 | |
| | | | The History of Little Jack. |
| CHARLES CHURCHILL 1731—1764 | Born at Westminster where his father was curate | 1731 | |
| | Educated at Westminster School and at Cambridge. Curate in Essex, and then at St. John's, Westminster. Acquired licentious habits. | | The Bard. Conclave. |
| | | 1761 | The Rosciad—poetical satire. An Apology to the Critical Reviewers. Night, an Epistle. |
| | Resigned his livings. | 1762 | The Ghost—a poetical satire. Contributions to The North Briton. |
| | | 1763 | The Prophecy of Famine, a Scots Pastoral—satire on Scotch influence and character. |

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE. | WRITINGS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| CHAS. CHURCHILL —*continued* | | | The Conference. An Epistle to William Hogarth. The Duellist—a poem in three books. |
| | Died at Boulogne. | 1764 | The Author—a poetical satire. Gotham—a poem. The Candidate—a poem. The Farewell. The Times. Independence. |
| | | 1770 | Collected Works. The Journey. Dedication to Churchill's Sermon. |
| THOMAS CHATTERTON 1752—1770 | Born at Bristol; the posthumous child of a poor schoolmaster, whose ancestors for many generations had been sextons of the church of St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol. Taught himself to read from an old blackletter Bible. | 1752 | |
| | Admitted to a Charity School. | 1760 | |
| | | 1762 | On the last Epiphany, written. |
| | | 1763 | Wrote Sly Dick, Apostate Will, and A Hymn for Christmas Day. |
| | Began to examine the old parchments locked up in Mr. Canynge's Cofre. | | Pieces in Felix Farley's Bristol Journal. |
| | | 1764 | Elinour and Juga—pseudo-antique poem, written. |
| | Articled to a lawyer in Bristol. | 1767 | Pedigree of the De Bergham family drawn up. |
| | | 1768 | An Account in Farley's Bristol Journal descriptive of the opening of the old Bristol bridge centuries before; written |

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| | | | by Dunhelmus Bristoliensis. Turgot's Account of Bristol, translated by T. Rowley out of Saxon into English, published in Barrett's History and Antiquities. Bristowe Tragedy—pseudo-antique poem. Rowley's Epitaph upon Canynge's Ancestor. |
| | Walpole laid some of his ancient poems before Mason and Gray who pronounced them forgeries. | 1769 | The Ryse of Peyncteyne in Englande, wroten by T. Rowlie, 1469, for Mastre Canynge--sent to Horace Walpole. Poems and Prose Essays in The Town and Country Magazine, London. Contributions to the Political Register, The Freeholder's Magazine, The London Museum, and to The Middlesex Journal |
| | Went to London where he suffered great hardships. | 1770 | Satires, stories, squibs, burlesques and essays. Balade of Charitie. Kew Gardens—a satiric poem. |
| | Committed suicide. | 1778 | Miscellanies in Prose and Verse. |
| | | 1875 | Poems—edited by Skeat—seventy-eight original and forty-three Rowley Poems including Bristowe Tragedy, Aella—a Tragycal Interlude, Goddwyn, Tournament, Battle of Hastings, The Parliament of Sprites. |
| JOHN WOLCOT (Peter Pindar) 1738—1819 | Born in Devon; the son of a surgeon. | 1738 | |
| | Educated at Kingsbridge and in France. | | |
| | M.D., Aberdeen. | 1767 | |
| | Went to Jamaica. | 1769 | |
| | Returned to England. | 1773 | |
| | Assumed Peter Pindar as *nom de plume*, | | |

| Name. | Biographical Details. | Date. | Writings. |
|---|---|---|---|
| John Wolcot —*continued* | and wrote much political satire. The Government bribed him with a pension of £300 per annum. | | |
| | Practised his profession first at Truro and then at London. | 1782 | Lyric Odes to the Royal Academicians. |
| | | 1786 | The Lousiad—mock heroic poem. Peeps at St. James. The Royal Visit to Exeter. An Epistle to James Boswell. Bozzy and Piozzi. Sir Joseph Banks and the Emperor of Morocco. A Complimentary Epistle to James Bruce. Apple Dumplings and a King. Whitbred's Brewery Visited by Their Majesties. |
| | | 1794—1801 | Works in five volumes. |
| | Died. | 1819 | |
| Christopher Anstey 1724—1805 | Born at Brinkley, Cambridge. | 1724 | |
| | Educated at Eton and Cambridge. | | |
| | Lived on his property in Cheshire. | | |
| | | 1766 | The New Bath Guide—a poem. The Farmer's Daughter. |
| | | 1774 | The Priest Dissected—a satire in verse. |
| | | 1776 | An Election Ball, in poetical letters from Mr. Inkle at Bath to his wife at Gloucester |
| | | 1780 | Speculation, or a Defence of Mankind. |
| | | Various dates | Liberality, or Memoirs of a Decayed Macaroni. Gay's Fables and Gray's Elegy in Latin. |
| | Died. | 1805 | |
| | | 1808 | Poetical Works. |

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| SIR JOHN HAWKINS 1719—1789 | Born at London | 1719 | |
| | The son of a surveyor. Practised as an attorney. | | |
| | | 1760 | Edited Walton's Complete Angler. |
| | Knighted in recognition of his services in quelling riots. | 1768 | |
| | | 1776 | General History of the Science and Practice of Music. |
| | | 1784 | Contributions to The Rolliad. |
| | | 1787 | Life of Dr. Johnson. |
| | Died | 1789 | |
| DR. FRENCH LAWRENCE (editor), died 1807, GENERAL FITZPATRICK (1747—1813), RICHARD TICKELL (died 1793), JOSEPH RICHARDSON (1758—1803), LORD JOHN TOWNSHEND (1757—1837), GEORGE ELLIS (1745—1815), SIR R. ADAIR, GENERAL BURGOYNE, HARE, REID, DUDLEY, BRUMMEL, BOSCAWEN, PEARCE, SIR JOHN HAWKINS. | | Begun in 1784 | The Rolliad—a series of political satires, the first of which was devoted to a humorous criticism on Colonel Rolle. Chief among the series are The Rolliad *par excellence*, Probationary Odes for the Laureateship, and Political Eclogues. |
| GEORGE ELLIS 1745—1815 | Devoted his leisure to the study of early English literature. | 1778 | Poetical Tales and Trifles by Sir Gregory Gander. |
| | | 1784 | Wrote The Birthday Ode, Ode on Dundas, Charles Jenkinson, and several of the criticisms and epigrams in The Rolliad. |
| | | 1790 | Specimens of the Early English Poets to which is prefixed an historical sketch of the Rise and Progress of the English Poetry and Language. |
| | | 1805 | Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances chiefly written during the early part of the 14th century with an historical introduction. |
| | Died | 1815 | |

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE. | WRITINGS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| WILLIAM GIFFORD 1757—1826 | Born at Ashburton in Devon. | 1757 | |
| | Early left homeless and friendless. First a cabin boy, then a shoemaker. Sent to Exeter College, Oxford by a surgeon interested in him. | | |
| | Befriended by Earl Grosvenor. | 1782 | |
| | | 1794 | The Baviad—a satire on the Della Cruscan school of poetry. |
| | | 1795 | The Mæviad—a satirical poem. |
| | | 1797 | A Poetical Epistle to Peter Pindar. |
| | | 1797—8 | Contributed epigrams, parodies and puns to The Anti-Jacobin. |
| | | 1802 | Translation of Juvenal. |
| | | 1805 | Edition of Massinger. |
| | | 1816 | ,, ,, Ben Jonson. |
| | | 1827 | ,, ,, Ford. |
| | | 1833 | ,, ,, Shirley. |
| | | 1809—1824 | Edited The Quarterly Review. |
| | Held a Government office. | | |
| | Died at London. | 1826 | |
| JOHN HOOKHAM FRERE 1769—1846 | Born at London. | 1769 | |
| | Came of an old Suffolk family. Educated at Eton and Cambridge. | | |
| | M.P. for Looe, Cornwall. | 1796 | |
| | | 1797—8 | Contributions to The Anti-Jacobin writing, with Canning, The Loves of the Triangles and The Needy Knife Grinder. |

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| | Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. | 1799 | |
| | Envoy to Lisbon. | 1800 | |
| | Minister to Spain. | 1802 and 1808 | |
| | | 1816--17 | The Monks and the Giants—a mock heroic poem in four cantos. |
| | Retired to Malta where he studied Greek, Hebrew and Maltese. | | |
| | | 1821 | Prospectus and Specimen of an Intended National Work by William and Robert Whistlecraft. |
| | Died at Malta. | 1841 | |
| | | 1847 | Translation of The Acharnians, The Knights, The Birds, and The Frogs of Aristophanes printed in The Classical Museum. |
| | | Various dates | Theognis Restitutus. Miscellanies. |
| GEORGE CANNING 1720—1827 | Born at London. | 1770 | |
| | Educated at Eton. | Nov. 1786—Aug. 1787 | The Microcosm—an Etonian journal. |
| | Entered Christchurch, Oxford. | 1787 | |
| | Entered Parliament. | 1793 | |
| | Under Secretary for State. | 1796 | |
| | With Frere, Jenkinson, Ellis, Lord Clare, and Lord Mornington started The Anti-Jacobin attacking those advocating revolutionary principles in England. | 1797 | |
| | | 1801 | Poetry of The Anti-Jacobin, including his Rovers, The Needy Knife Grinder, and The Loves of the Triangles. |

| Name. | Biographical Details. | Date. | Writings. |
|---|---|---|---|
| George Canning —*continued* | Devoted himself to politics. | | |
| | Died at Chiswick. | 1827 | |
| | | 1828 | Speeches |
| Hester Lynch Piozzi 1740—1821 | Born in Carnarvonshire ; daughter of a Mr. Salusbury. | 1740 | |
| | Married Mr. Thrale, a brewer | 1763 | |
| | Became intimately acquainted with Dr. Johnson. | 1764 | |
| | | 1765 | Poems in the Miscellanies published by A. M. Williams. |
| | Married Piozzi, an Italian music master Settled at Florence. | 1784 | |
| | | 1786 | Prose and Verse with Merry, Greathead, and Parsons, the founders of the Della-cruscan school of English poetry, in The Florentine Miscellany. Anecdotes of the late Samuel Johnson, LL.D., during the last twenty years of his life. |
| | | 1788 | Letters to and from Dr. Samuel Johnson, to which are added some poems. |
| | | 1789 | Observations and Reflections made in the course of a journey through France, Italy and Germany. |
| | | 1794 | British Synonymy. |
| | | 1801 | Retrospection -- a review of the last eighteen hundred years. |
| | Died | 1821 | |

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| | | 1838 | Literary Correspondence — edited by Turner. |
| | | 1843 | Love Letters — addressed to A. W. Conway. |
| | | 1861 | Autobiography, Letters and Literary Remains —edited by Hayward. |
| ROBERT MERRY 1755—1798 | Born at London. Son of a merchant ; educated at Harrow and Oxford. After trying the law and the army, he went to Italy where he became a member of the Della-crusca Academy at Florence, and carried on a poetical correspondence under that signature in the English newspapers. | 1755 | |
| | | 1790 | Ambitious Vengeance, a drama. |
| | | 1791 | Lorenzo, a tragedy. |
| | | 1792 | The Magician no Conjuror — a comic opera. |
| | | 1795 | Fénélon—a drama. |
| BERTIE GREATHEAD | Died at Baltimore, America. An amateur artist and member of the Della-crusca circle. Wrote in The Florentine Miscellany. | 1798 | |
| | | 1783 | Essay on the Right of Conquest. |
| | | 1788 | The Regent—a tragedy. |
| WILLIAM PARSONS | Died. Also contributed to The Florentine Miscellany. | 1804 | |
| | | 1784—6 | A Poetical Tour. |
| | | 1786 | Ode to a Boy and other Poems. |
| | | 1807 | Poems—Travelling Recreations. |

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE. | WRITINGS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| ELIZABETH MONTAGUE 1720—1800 | Daughter of a Matthew Robinson. Married Mr. Montague, a descendant of the Earl of Sandwich. | 1742 | |
| | | 1769 | Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare compared with the Greek and French Dramatic Poets, with some remarks upon the misrepresentations of Mons. de Voltaire. |
| | Opened her house to the famous Blue-Stocking Club, an assembly of literary women, among whom were Mrs. Jerningham and Miss Monckton. | 1780 | Three Dialogues of the Dead. |
| | Died | 1800 | |
| | | 1809—13 | Letters published. |
| MRS. HANNAH COWLEY 1749—1809 | Born in Devon; daughter of a Mr. Parkhouse. Married an Indian army captain. Corresponded with Merry under *nom de plume* of Anna Matilda. | 1749 | |
| | | 1776 | The Runaway—a comedy. |
| | | 1779 | Who's the Dupe?—a comedy. |
| | | 1780 | The Belle's Stratagem—comedy. A Bold Stroke for a Husband—comedy. The Maid of Arragon—a poem. The Scottish Village—a poem. The Siege of Acre—a poem. |
| | Died. | 1809 | |

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| DAVID MALLET 1700—1765 | Born at Crieff, Perth; the son of James Malloch, an innkeeper. | 1700 | |
| | Educated at Aberdeen and Edinburgh. Tutor to the sons of the Duke of Montrose; toured Europe. | | |
| | | 1727 | William and Margaret—a ballad. |
| | | 1728 | The Excursion—a poem in two cantos. |
| | | 1731 | Eurydice—a tragedy. |
| | Private Secretary to the Prince of Wales. | | |
| | | 1733 | Verbal Criticism—a poem. |
| | | 1739 | Mustapha—a tragedy. |
| | | 1740 | Alfred—a masque—with Thomson, in which Rule Britannia occurs; re-written 1751. Life of Bacon. |
| | | 1747 | Amynta and Theodora—a poem. |
| | | 1759 | Works. |
| | | 1761 | Truth in Rhyme—a poetical epistle. |
| | | 1763 | Elvira—a tragedy. |
| | Died. | 1765 | |
| SOAME JENYNS 1704—1787 | Of a wealthy family. Educated at Cambridge. | 1728 | The Art of Dancing—a poem. |
| | Entered Parliament. | 1741 | |
| | | 1756 | A Free Enquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil. |
| | | 1770 | Miscellanies. |
| | | 1776 | Review of the Internal Evidences of the Christian Religion. |
| | | 1782 | Dissertations on Various Subjects. |
| | Died. | 1787 | |
| | | 1790 | Works. |

| Name. | Biographical Details. | Date. | Writings. |
|---|---|---|---|
| GEORGE, LORD LYTTELTON 1709—1773 | Born, son of Sir Thomas Lyttelton, in Worcestershire. | 1709 | |
| | Educated at Eton and Oxford. | | |
| | Entered Parliament. | 1730 | |
| | | 1735 | Letters from a Persian in England to his friend in Ispahan. |
| | | 1747 | Observation on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul. |
| | Chancellor of the Exchequer. | 1756 | |
| | Gained a peerage | 1759 | |
| | | 1760 | Dialogues of the Dead. |
| | | 1764 | History of the Reign of Henry II.. |
| | Died. | 1773 | |
| | | Various dates | Blenheim — a poem. The Progress of Love |
| | | 1774 | Miscellaneous Works. |
| | | 1785 | Poetical Works. |
| PAUL WHITEHEAD 1710—1774 | Born at Holborn. Son of a tailor. | 1710 | |
| | Apprenticed to a mercer; married an imbecile with a fortune; active in politics. | | |
| | | 1733 | State Dunces |
| | | 1739 | Manners |
| | | Various dates | Honour, Satires, The Gymnasiad. |
| | Died. | 1774 | |

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| WILLIAM WHITEHEAD 1715—1785 | Born, son of a baker, at Cambridge. | 1715 | |
| | Educated at Cambridge. Fellow of his College. | 1742 | |
| | Tutor to Lord Jersey's son. Secretary and Registrar of the Order of the Bath. | 1755 | |
| | | 1741 | On the Danger of Writing Verse. |
| | | 1743 | Atys and Adrastus. An Essay on Ridicule. |
| | | 1750 | The Roman Father. |
| | | 1754 | Creusa—a tragedy. |
| | Succeeded Cibber as Poet Laureate. | 1757 | |
| | | 1762 | A Charge to the Poets. The School for Lovers—a comedy. |
| | | 1770 | The Trip to Scottand. |
| | | 1774 | Collection of Plays and Poems. |
| | Died. | 1785 | |
| | | 1788 | Further pieces. |
| CALEB WHITEFORD 1734—1809 | Wit and Satirist. | | Epigrams and other verse in The Public Advertiser. |
| HORACE WALPOLE 1717—1797 | Born at London. | 1717 | |
| | Third son of Sir Robert Walpole. Educated at Eton and Cambridge | | |
| | Started on the grand tour with Gray. | 1739 | |
| | Purchased what afterwards became the "curiosity shop" at Strawberry Hill. | 1747 | |
| | | 1752 | Aedes Walpolianae |
| | | 1758 | Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England with Lists of their works. |
| | | | Fugitive pieces in verse and prose. |

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE. | WRITINGS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| HORACE WALPOLE *continued* | | 1760 | Catalogue of the Pictures of the Collection of the Duke of Devonshire. |
| | | 1762—71 | Anecdotes of Painting in England. |
| | | 1763 | Catalogue of Engravers who were born or have resided in England. |
| | | 1765 | The Castle of Otranto—a romance. |
| | | 1768 | Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of King Richard III. The Mysterious Mother—a tragedy. |
| | | 1772 | Miscellaneous Antiquities. Description of the Villa at Strawberry Hill. |
| | | 1779 | Letter to the Editor of the Miscellanies of Thomas Chatterton. |
| | | 1785 | Hieroglyphick Tales. Essay on Modern Gardening. |
| | Became Earl of Orford. | 1791 | Hasty Productions. |
| | Died. | 1797 | |
| | | 1812 | Memoirs of the last ten years of the reign of George II.—edited by Lord Holland |
| | | 1818 | Reminiscences. |
| | | 1845 | Memoirs of the reign of George III. from his accession to 1771—edited by Le Marchant. |
| | | 1859 | Journal of the reign of George III. 1771—1783—edited by Dr. Doran. |
| | | 1857 | Letters—edited by Cunningham |

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| WILLIAM MICKLE 1734—1788 | Born at Langholm, Dumfriesshire. Son of a minister. First a brewer, then corrector of the Clarendon Press at Oxford. | 1734 | |
| | | 1762 | Providence—a poem. |
| | | 1765 | Pollio—a poem. |
| | | 1767 | The Concubine, in imitation of Spenser; corrected and enlarged, 1777, as Sir Mertyn. |
| | | 1769 | Letter to Dr. Harwood against Arian views. |
| | | 1770 | Mary, Queen of Scots. Voltaire in the Shades. |
| | Visited Lisbon. | | |
| | | 1775 | The Lusiad, from the Portuguese of Camoëns. The Siege of Marseilles—a tragedy. |
| | | 1781 | Almada Hill—a poem. Cumnor Hall—a ballad. |
| | Returned to London. | | |
| | | 1782 | The Prophecy of Queen Emma. |
| | | 1788 | Eskdale Braes—a ballad. |
| | Died at Wheatly, Oxford. | 1789 | |
| | | 1806 | Works. |
| WILLIAM SHENSTONE 1714—1763 | Born at Leastowes, Worcester. Educated at Pembroke College, Oxford Retired to Worcestershire, and there spent most of his time and money in ornamenting his estate. | 1714 | |
| | | 1745 | |
| | | 1737 | Poems upon Several Occasions. |
| | | 1741 | The Judgement of Hercules—a poem. |

| Name. | Biographical Details. | Date. | Writings. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wm. Shenstone —*continued* | | 1742 | The Schoolmistress—a poem. |
| | | 1746 | Jemmy Dawson—a ballad written. |
| | | 1743 | A Pastoral Ballad in Four Parts. |
| | | | The Progress of Taste. Lines written in an Inn at Henley. Elegies. |
| | Died. | 1763 | |
| James Thomson 1700—1748 | | 1764—9 | Works in Prose and Verse. Essays on Men and Manners. |
| | Born at Ednam, Roxburgh | 1700 | |
| | The son of a minister. Educated at Jedburgh and Edinburgh for the church, but came to London as a literary adventurer. | | |
| | | 1726 | Winter—a poem in blank verse. |
| | | 1727 | Summer. A Poem on the Death of Sir Isaac Newton. Sophonisba—a tragedy. |
| | | 1727 | Britannia—a poetical invective. |
| | | 1728 | Spring. |
| | Travelled with the son of the Chancellor. | | |
| | | 1730 | Autumn. |
| | Appointed Secretary of the Briefs; lost this office, and gained a pension of £100 a year. | | |
| | | 1734—6 | Liberty—a poem—written. |
| | | 1738 | Agamemnon—a tragedy. |
| | | 1739 | Edward and Eleonora—a tragedy. |
| | | 1740 | Alfred—a masque (with Mallet). |

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| | Died at London. | 1745 | Tancred and Sigismunda—a tragedy. |
| | | 1748 | The Castle of Indolence—a Spenserian poem. |
| | | 1749 | Coriolanus—a tragedy. |
| | | 1762 | Works—edited by Murdoch. |
| JAMES BEATTIE 1735—1803 | Born at Laurencekirk, Kincardine. | 1735 | |
| | The son of a farmer. Educated at Marischal College, Aberdeen. | 1749—53 | |
| | Schoolmaster and parish clerk at Fordoun, a village at the foot of the Grampians. | 1753 | |
| | Master in the Grammar School, Aberdeen | 1758 | |
| | Professor of Moral Philosophy in Marischal College. | 1760 | Poems and Translations. |
| | | 1765 | The Judgement of Paris. |
| | | 1766 | On the Talk of erecting a Monument to Churchill in Westminster Abbey—a poem |
| | | 1770 | Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth in opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism. |
| | Visited London. LL.D., Oxford. | 1771 | The Minstrel, Book I. (Book II., 1774). |
| | | 1776 | On Poetry and Music as they affect the Mind. On Laughter and Ludicrous Composition. On the Utility of Classical Learning. |
| | | 1779—80 | Contributions to The Mirror. |
| | | 1783 | Dissertations Moral and Political. |
| | | 1786 | Evidence of the Christian Religion. |
| | | 1790—3 | Elements of Moral Science. |
| | Weighed down by the grief caused by the insanity of his wife and the death of his sons. | 1790—6 | |

| Name. | Biographical Details. | Date. | Writings. |
|---|---|---|---|
| WILLIAM COLLINS 1721—1759 | Born at Chichester | 1721 | |
| | Son of a hatter. Educated at Winchester and at Oxford. | | |
| | | 1742 | Persian Eclogues and Odes. |
| | | 1743 | Verses to Sir Thomas Hanmer on his edition of Shakespeare. |
| | Left the University for London as a literary adventurer. | 1744 | Proposals for a History of the Revival of Learning. |
| | Freed from pecuniary difficulties by a legacy; but disease and insanity attacked him. | | |
| | | 1747 | Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegorical Subjects. |
| | | 1749 | Ode occasioned by the Death of Mr. Thomson. |
| | Died at Chichester. | 1759 | |
| | | 1765 | Poetical Works—edited by Langhorne. |
| THOMAS GRAY 1716—1771 | Born at Cornhill, London | 1716 | |
| | Son of a money-scrivener. Educated at Eton. | | |
| | Entered Cambridge University | 1734 | |
| | Left Cambridge and studied law | 1738 | |
| | Set out on a tour of Europe with Horace Walpole. | 1739 | Several Latin Poems and Fragments written. |
| | After his return to England he resided mainly at Cambridge where he refined | | |

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| | and cultivated his mind by the study of the fine arts. | | |
| | | 1742 | Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College. Ode on Spring. Hymn to Adversity. |
| | | 1750 | Elegy written in a Country Churchyard. |
| | | 1757 | The Alliance of Education and Government—poem, begun 1748. Ode to Vicissitude. The Progress of Poesy. The Bard. |
| | Professor of Modern Languages and History at Cambridge. | 1768—71 | |
| | | 1769 | On the Installation of the Duke of Grafton to the Chancellorship of the University of Cambridge. |
| | Died at Cambridge. | 1771 | |
| | | 1786 | Poems—edited by Wakefield. |
| WILLIAM MASON 1725—1797 | Born at Hull. Son of a clergyman. | 1725 | |
| | B.A. Cambridge. | 1745 | |
| | | 1747 | Musaeus—a translation. |
| | | 1748 | Isis—a poem. |
| | | 1753 | Elfrida—a tragedy. |
| | Rector of Aston, and chaplain to the King. Afterwards Precentor and Canon of York. | 1754 | |
| | | 1756 | Odes on Independence. Memory. Melancholy. The Fall of Tyranny. |
| | | 1759 | Caractacus—a tragedy. |
| | | 1772—8 | The English Garden—descriptive poem. |

| Name. | Biographical Details. | Date. | Writings. |
|---|---|---|---|
| William Mason *continued* | | 1773 | An Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers, Knight. |
| | | 1775 | The Poems of Gray with a Memoir. |
| | Died. | 1797 | |
| James Macpherson 1738—1796 | Born at Ruthven, Inverness. | 1738 | |
| | Educated at King's College, Aberdeen. | | |
| | Schoolmaster at Ruthven. | 1758 | The Highlanders—an heroic poem in six cantos. |
| | Met Horne and Rev. Carlyle for whom he translated some Gaelic verses. | 1759 | Poems in The Scots Magazine. |
| | | 1760 | Fragments of Ancient Poetry collected in the Highlands of Scotland and translated from the Gaelic or Erse language. |
| | Travelled through the Highlands. | 1760—1 | |
| | | 1762 | Fingal—epic poem in six books. This with the next poem he represented as the production of Ossian, an ancient Gaelic poet. |
| | | 1763 | Temora—an epic poem in eight books. |
| | Appointed to an office in America. | | |
| | Returned to England. | 1766 | |
| | | 1771 | An Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland. |
| | | 1773 | Prose Translation of Homer's Iliad. |
| | | 1775 | History of Great Britain from the Restoration to the Accession of the House of Hanover. Original Papers. Pamphlets |

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| | | | in support of the war against the colonies. |
| | M.P. for Camelford. | 1780 | |
| | Retired to his estate. | | |
| | Died in Inverness. | 1796 | |
| THOMAS PERCY | Born at Bridgenorth, Shropshire; son of a grocer. Educated at Oxford. | 1728 | |
| 1728—1811 | Vicar of Easton Mauduit and Rector of Wilby. | | Translation from a Portuguese M.S. on the Chinese. Miscellaneous Pieces relating to the Chinese. |
| | | 1763 | Five Pieces of Runic Poetry translated from the Icelandic. |
| | | 1764 | New Version of Solomon's Song, with a Commentary and Notes. |
| | | 1765 | Reliques of Ancient English Poetry. |
| | Domestic Chaplain to the Duke of Northumberland. | 1766 | |
| | | 1770 | The Northumberland Household Book. Northern Antiquities—from the French of Mallet. |
| | | 1771 | The Hermit of Warkworth—a poem. |
| | Dean of Carlisle. | 1778 | |
| | Bishop of Dromore. | 1782 | |
| | | 1793 | Essay on the Origin of the English Stage. |
| | Died. | 1811 | |
| LADY ANNE BANARD | Eldest daughter of the Earl of Balcarres. Visited Cape Colony. | | |
| 1750—1825 | Returned to London. | 1807 | |
| | | 1771 | Auld Robin Gray—a ballad. |
| ALEXANDER ROSS | Born in Aberdeenshire. | 1699 | |
| | Educated at Marischal College. | | |
| 1699—1784 | Schoolmaster at Lochlea, Angus. | 1732 | |

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE | WRITINGS. |
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| ALEXANDER ROSS *continued* | | 1768 | Helenore, or The Fortunate Shepherd, a Pastoral Tale in the Scottish Dialect, to which are added a Few Songs by the Author.—Includes Woo'd and Married and A', The Rock, The Wee Pickled Tow, and a humorous poem by Dr. Beattie in the broad Scottish dialect. Eight volumes unpublished works. |
| JOHN PINKERTON 1758—1826 | Born at Edinburgh. | 1758 | |
| | Educated at Lanark Grammar School. | | |
| | Apprenticed to a writer to the Signet. | | |
| | | 1776 | An Ode to Craigmillar Castle. |
| | Went to London. | 1780 | |
| | | 1781 | Scottish Tragic Ballads (Comic 1782). |
| | | 1782 | An Essay on Medals. Rimes. Tales in Verse. Two Dithyrambic Odes on Enthusiasm and Laughter. |
| | | 1783 | Select Scottish Ballads. |
| | | 1786 | The Treasury of Wit. |
| | | 1785 | Letters on Literature. |
| | | 1786 | Ancient Scottish Poems. |
| | | 1787 | A Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians or Goths. |
| | | 1789 | Vitae Antiquae Sanctorum, etc. An Enquiry into the History of Scotland. Edited Barbour's Bruce. |
| | | 1790 | The Medallic History of England to the Revolution. |

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| | | 1792 | Scottish Poems. |
| | | 1793 | Observations on the Antiquities, etc., of Western Scotland. |
| | | 1797 | Iconographia Scotica. History of Scotland from the Accession of the House of Stuart to that of Mary, |
| | | 1799 | Walpoliana. The Scottish Gallery. |
| | Lived in Paris. | 1802—5 | |
| | | 1806 | Recollections of Paris. |
| | | Various dates | Modern Geography. Petralogy. |
| | Died at Paris. | 1826 | |
| | | 1830 | Literary Correspondence. |
| THOMAS BLACKLOCK 1721—1791 | Born at Annan. | 1721 | |
| | Lost his sight in infancy. | | |
| | Educated at Edinburgh. | | |
| | | 1754 | Poems. |
| | | 1756 | An Essay towards Universal Etymology. |
| | Licensed as a minister. | 1759 | |
| | | 1760 | Collection of poems. |
| | D.D., Aberdeen. | 1767 | Paraclesis, or Consolations deduced from Natural and Revealed Religion. |
| | | 1768 | Discources on the Spirit and Evidences of Christianity from the French of Arnaud. |
| | | 1773 | A Satirical Panegyric on Great Britain. |
| | | 1774 | The Grahame—an heroic ballad. |
| | Died. | 1791 | |
| | | 1793 | Poems. |
| | | Various dates | Remarks on the Nature and Extent of Liberty. Blindness—in the Encyclopædia Britannica. |

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE. | WRITINGS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| HECTOR MACNEILL 1746—1818 | Born at Rosebank near Roslin. | 1746 | |
| | | 1789 | The Harp. |
| | | 1795 | Scotland's Skaith, or the History o' Will and Jean. |
| | | 1796 | The Links of the Forth. The Waes o' War. |
| | | Various dates | Memoirs of Charles Macpherson. The Pastoral and Lyric Muse of Scotland. Town Fashions. Byegone Times. The Scottish Adventurer. |
| ROBERT FERGUSSON 1750—1774 | Born at Edinburgh. Educated at the University of St. Andrews. Employed in the office of the commissary clerk of Edinburgh. Gave way to debauchery which ended in madness. | 1750 | Grave and humorous pieces both in English and in the Scottish dialect in Ruddiman's Weekly Magazine; the chief are:—Auld Reekie; The Mutual Complaint of Planestanes and Causey; On seeing a Butterfly in the Street; The Farmer's Ingle. |
| | Died. | 1773 | |
| | | 1774 | Poems. |
| ROBERT BURNS 1759—1796 | Born at Alloway near Ayr. Educated at Alloway Mill School and at home; scarcely any Latin, but knew French. | 1759 | |
| | Family removed to Mt. Oliphant Farm Regular schooling ended; worked on | 1766 | |

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| the farm. | 1773 | |
| | 1774 | Once I loved a Bonny Lass—his first song. |
| Family removed to Lochlea. | 1777 | |
| Death of his father; took with his brother Gilbert the farm of Mossgiel; first acquainted with Jean Armour. | 1784 | |
| | 1785 | Wrote Epistle to Davie; Death and Doctor Hornbrook; The Twa Herds; The Jolly Beggars; Hallow E'en; The Cottar's Saturday Night; Holy Willie's Prayer; The Holy Fair; The Address to a Mouse. |
| Intended to go to Jamaica; received a letter from Dr. Blacklock and, in consequence of this, went to Edinburgh. | 1786 | The Twa Dogs; The Lament; Despondency; To a Mountain Daisy written. Poems—published at Kilmarnock. |
| | 1787 | Poems—Edinburgh edition. Letters to Clarinda. Songs in The Scots Musical Magazine. |
| Took Ellisland Farm near Dumfries; married Jean Armour. | 1788 | |
| | 1789 | To Mary in Heaven—written. |
| Gained an appointment in the Excise. | 1790 | Elegy on Capt. Matthew Henderson; Tam o'Shanter written. |
| Removed to Dumfries. | 1791 | Farewell to Clarinda written (Had we never loved so kindly). |
| | 1793 | Poems—Edinburgh and London edition. Scots Wha Hae written. |
| | 1794 | Various lampoons. |
| | 1795 | Songs against the French. |

| Name. | Biographical Details. | Date. | Writings. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Robert Burns *—continued* | Died at Dumfries. | 1796 | |
| | | 1800 | Complete Works—edited by Dr. Currie. |
| Hannah More 1745—1833 | Born at Stapleton, near Bristol. | 1745 | |
| | Daughter of Jacob More a schoolmaster | | |
| | Established, with her sisters, a boarding-school at Bristol. | 1767 | |
| | | 1773 | A Search after Happiness—pastoral plays. |
| | | 1774 | The Inflexible Captive—a drama. |
| | Received an annuity from a wealthy friend. Became acquainted with Johnson, Burke, and Reynolds. Verse writer, moralist, and a practical philanthropist. | | Eldred of the Bower—a ballad. |
| | | | Percy—a tragedy. |
| | | 1779 | The Fatal Falsehood—drama. |
| | | 1782 | Sacred Dramas. Bas-Bleu, a poem. |
| | | | Florio, a poem. |
| | Retired to Gloucester and Somerset. | 1786 | |
| | | 1788 | Thoughts on the Manners of the Great—prose. |
| | | 1790 | An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World—prose. |
| | | 1799 | Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education—prose. |
| | | 1805 | Hints towards forming the Character of a Young Princess—prose. |
| | | 1809 | Calebs in Search of a Wife—a tale. |
| | | 1811 | Practical Piety. |

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| | | 1813 | Christian Morals. |
| | | 1815 | Essay on the Character of St. Paul. |
| | | 1818 | Moral Sketches. |
| | | 1795—98 | Rhymes and Tales in The Cheap Repository Series. |
| | Went to live at Clifton, | 1828 | |
| | where she died. | 1833 | |
| WILLIAM COWPER 1731—1800 | Born at Great Berkhampstead, Hertfordshire. Son of the rector. | 1731 | |
| | Death of his mother; sent to school at Market Street. | 1737 | |
| | Sent to Westminster School. | 1745 | |
| | Articled to an attorney. | 1749 | |
| | Called to the Bar. | 1754 | |
| | Appointed Clerk of the Journals of the House of Lords; went mad; sent to an asylum at St. Albans. | 1763 | |
| | Lived with the Unwins at Huntingdon. | 1766 | |
| | With Mrs. Unwin at Olney. | 1767 | Hymns. |
| | Second period of insanity. | 1773—6 | |
| | | 1781 | Anti-Thelypthora. |
| | | 1782 | Truth, Table Talk, Expostulation, The Progress of Error, Heroism. |
| | Closely acquainted with Lady Austen. | 1782—5 | |
| | | 1782 | John Gilpin—a ballad in The Public Advertiser. |
| | | 1785 | The Task; Tirocinium. |
| | Removed to Weston. | 1786 | |
| | Third attack of insanity. | 1787 | |
| | | 1790 | On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture out of Norfolk. |

| Name. | Biographical Details. | Date. | Writings. |
|---|---|---|---|
| William Cowper —*continued* | | 1791 | Translation of Homer. |
| | Received a pension from the king. | 1794 | |
| | Last attack of insanity. | 1796 | |
| | | 1799 | Gay's Fables in Latin. The Castaway; Translation of Latin Verses of Vincent Bourne; Revised edition of Homer. |
| | Died. | 1800 | |
| | | 1803 | Posthumous Writings—edited by Hayley. |
| | | 1816 | Memoirs of the Early Life of William Cowper, written by himself. |
| WILLIAM HAYLEY 1745—1820 | Born at Chichester | 1745 | |
| | Educated at Cambridge. | | |
| | Settled at Eartham in Sussex. | 1774 | |
| | | 1778 | Essay on Painting. |
| | | 1780 | Essay on History. |
| | | 1781 | The Triumphs of Temper — a poem. |
| | | 1782 | Essay on Epic Poetry. |
| | | 1785 | Essay on Old Maids. |
| | Became acquainted with Cowper. | 1792 | |
| | | 1794—9 | Life and Poetical Works of Milton. |
| | | 1800 | Essay on Sculpture. |
| | | 1802 | Life of Cowper. |
| | Died | 1820 | |
| | | 1823 | Life of Hayley, by himself. |
| | | Various dates | The Afflicted Father—a drama. The Triumphs of Music—a poem. |

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| JOSEPH WARTON 1722—1800 | Born at Dunsford, Oxford. Son of a clergyman. Held various curacies. | 1722 | |
| | | | Contributions to The Gentleman's Magazine. |
| | | 1746 | Ode on Superstition. Odes and other Poems. |
| | | 1749 | Ode to Mr. West. |
| | | 1753 | Edition of Vergil with a verse translation of the Eclogues and Georgics. Popular critical essays in Dr. Hawkworth's Adventurer. |
| | | 1754 | Collections. |
| | | 1756—82 | Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope. |
| | Head Master Winchester School. | 1766—93 | |
| | | 1797 | Annotated Edition of Pope. Annotated Edition of Dryden (two volumes only). |
| | Died. | 1800 | |
| | | 1806 | Letters—edited by Wooll. |
| THOMAS WARTON 1728—1790 | Born at Basingstoke. Younger brother of Joseph Warton Powers prematurely developed. Translated the Epigrams of Martial when nine years of age. Educated at Oxford. | 1728 | |
| | | 1745 | The Pleasures of Melancholy. Five Pastoral Eclogues. |
| | | 1749 | The Triumph of Isis—a poetical answer to Mason's Isis. |
| | Gained a Fellowship. | 1751 | An Ode for Music. |
| | Gained the friendship of Johnson. | 1753 | The Union: select Scotch and English pieces. Observations on the Faërie Queene of Spenser. |

| Name. | Biographical Details. | Date. | Writings. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Thomas Warton —*continued* | Professor of Poetry at Oxford. | 1756 | The Observer Observed. |
| | | 1757 | Prose contributions to The Idler, The Adventurer, The Connoisseur, The World. |
| | | 1758 | Latin Metrical Inscriptions. |
| | | 1760 | Life of Sir Thomas Pope. |
| | | 1761 | Life and Literary Remains of Ralph Bathurst. Oxford Collection of Verses. |
| | | 1764 | The Oxford Sausage—jeux d'esprit |
| | | 1770 | Edition of Theocritus. Edition of Browne's Pastorals. |
| | Fellow of the Antiquarian Society. | 1771 | |
| | | 1774—8—81 | History of English Poetry. |
| | | 1781 | A History of Kiddington Parish. |
| | Member of the Literary Club | 1782 | An Enquiry into the Poems attributed to Thomas Rowley. |
| | Poet Laureate. | 1785 | Edition of Milton. |
| | | Various dates | The Progress of Discontent; Newmarket, a satire; A Panegyric on Ale; A Description of the City, College and Castle of Winchester. |
| | Died. | 1790 | |
| | | 1802 | Poetical Works—edited by Mant. |
| William Blake 1757—1827 | Born at London. | 1757 | |
| | Second son of James Blake, a hosier. | | |
| | Received a scanty education. | | |
| | Began to attend a drawing school. | 1767 | |
| | Apprenticed to an engraver. | 1771—8 | |

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| Studied at the Royal Academy, and executed prints for The Novelist's Magazine. | | |
| Exhibited his picture The Death of Earl Godwin. | 1780 | |
| Married Catharine Boucher the daughter of his landlady. | 1782 | |
| Frequented Mrs. Mathew's *conversazioni* where he read his poems. | 1782—5 | |
| | 1783 | The Poetical Sketches printed. |
| | 1789 | The Songs of Innocence. The Book of Thel. |
| | 1790 | The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. |
| | 1791 | The French Revolution, a Poem in Seven Books : Book I. |
| Mixed with men like Price, Priestly, Godwin, Paine, Holcroft. | | |
| | 1793 | The Songs of Experience. The Gates of Paradise. The Vision of the Daughters of Albion. America—a Prophecy. |
| | 1794 | Europe—a Prophecy. The Book of Urizen, Part I. |
| | 1795 | Africa—a Prophecy. Asia—a Prophecy. These two prophetic books complete as The Song of Los. The Book of Ahania. |
| Illustrated Young's Night Thoughts. | 1797 | |
| Went to live at Felpham with Hayley. | 1800 | |
| Illustrated Hayley's Life of Cowper. | | |
| Here learned Greek, and afterwards Latin, French and Italian. | | |
| Acquitted on a charge of sedition. Returned to London. | 1804 | Milton, a poem in Two Books. Jerusalem, the Emanation of the Giant Albion. |

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE. | WRITINGS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| WILLIAM BLAKE —*continued* | Illustrated Blair's Grave. | 1804—5 | |
| | | 1809 | Descriptive Catalogue of his Works. |
| | Engraving of the Canterbury Pilgrims. | 1810 | |
| | Became acquainted with Linnel the landscape painter. | | |
| | Water colour paintings from The Book of Job. | 1822 | The Ghost of Abel. |
| | Job prints issued. | 1826 | |
| | Illustrated Dante's Divine Comedy. | 1827 | |
| | Died. | | Left numerous unpublished poems, *e.g.*, The Everlasting Gospel, Epigrams and Satirical Pieces on Art and Artists, Tiriel, Vala, or the Death and Judgement of the Ancient Man, and Outhoun. |
| WILLIAM WORDSWORTH 1770—1850 | Born at Cockermouth; son of a law-agent. | April 7, 1770 | |
| | Went to Hawkshead School. | 1778 | |
| | Entered St. John's, Cambridge. | 1787 | |
| | Tour in Switzerland and France. | 1790 | |
| | B.A. Went to France again; his revolutionary period. | 1791 | |
| | | 1793 | The Evening Walk. Descriptive Sketches. |
| | Calvert bequeathed him £900; he settled in Dorset with his sister Dorothy. | 1795 | |
| | | 1796 | Salisbury Plain written. The Borderers—a tragedy—written. |
| | Met Coleridge. | 1797 | |
| | Tour in Germany. | 1798 | Lyrical Ballads (with Coleridge). Peter |

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| | | Bell written. |
| Settled at Grasmere. | 1799 | The Prelude written. |
| | 1800 | Lyrical Ballads, Vol. II. |
| Married Mary Hutchinson. | 1802 | The Excursion begun. The Sonnet to Milton written. |
| Tour in Scotland. | 1803 | Yarrow Unvisited—written. |
| | 1804 | To the Cuckoo—written. |
| | 1803—6 | Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood--written. |
| | 1805 | Ode on Duty. |
| | 1807 | Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle —written. |
| Distributor of Stamps. | 1813—42 | |
| Removed to Rydal Mount. | 1813 | |
| | 1814 | The Excursion published. Yarrow Visited—written. Laodamia—written. |
| | 1815 | The White Doe of Rylstone (written 1807) Artigal and Elidure—written. |
| | 1816 | Dion—written. |
| | 1819 | Peter Bell. |
| | 1817 | Ode to Lycoris. |
| | 1819 | The Waggoner (written 1805). Sonnets on the River Duddon. |
| | 1830 | The Armenian Lady's Love. The Egyptian Maid, and The Russian Fugitive —written. |
| Made a farewell visit to Scott at Abbotsford. | 1831 | Yarrow Revisited—written. |
| Travelled in Italy. | 1837 | |
| LL.D., Oxford. | 1839 | |
| Received a pension of £300 a year. | 1842 | The Borderers. Poems chiefly of early and later years. |

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE. | WRITINGS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| WM. WORDSWORTH —*continued* | Succeeded Southey as Poet Laureate. | 1843 | |
| | Died. | 1850 | The Prelude. Sonnets : — Composed in Scotland ; Dedicated to National Liberty and Independence ; On Continental Tours ; Ecclesiastical Sonnets ; Dedicated to Liberty and Order. |
| SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE 1772—1834 | Born at Ottery St. Mary, Devon, where his father was vicar. | 1772 | |
| | Sent to Christ's Hospital. | 1782 | |
| | Entered at Cambridge. | 1791 | Translated Hymns of Synesius. |
| | Left without a degree. | 1794 | The Fall of Robespierre written. Poems. The Watchman, nine numbers. |
| | Joined Southey and Lovell in a scheme for founding a Pantisocratic State at Susquehannah ; married Sara Fricker. | 1795 | Conciones ad Populum. |
| | Preached in Unitarian Chapels round Bristol. | 1796 | |
| | Met Wordsworth. | 1797 | Poems, with Charles Lamb. |
| | Presented with annuity of £150 ; tour in Germany. | 1798 | Lyrical Ballads, with Wordsworth—include The Ancient Mariner and The Nightingale. |
| | Lived at Greta Hall, Keswick, near Wordsworth ; now began to use opium freely. | 1799 | Translation of Wallenstein. Prose and Verse in The Morning Post. Dejection, an Ode—written. |

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| | Visited Malta, Sicily, Naples, Rome. | 1804—6 | |
| | | 1808—14 | Contributions to The Courier. |
| | | Aug. 1809— | The Friend. |
| | Lectured on Shakespeare and on Education. | 1809—10—11 | |
| | | 1813 | Remorse, a tragedy. |
| | Lived at Highgate. | 1816 | Christabel and Kubla Khan published. The Statesman's Manual. |
| | | 1817 | Sibylline Leaves. Biographia Literaria. |
| | | 1816—17 | Two Lay Sermons. |
| | | 1830 | On the Constitution of Church and State according to the Idea of Each. |
| | | 1818 | Zapolya, a tragedy. |
| | | 1825 | Aids to Reflection. |
| | Died. | 1834 | |
| | | 1836—8 | Literary Remains. |
| | | 1836 | Letters, Conversations and Recollections, edited by Allsopp. |
| | | 1840 | Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit. |
| | | 1845 | Essay on Method. |
| | | 1886 | Letters to Sir George and Lady Beaumont. |
| ROBERT SOUTHEY 1774—1843 | Born at Bristol the son of a linen draper. | 1774 | |
| | Went to Westminster School. | 1788 | |
| | Expelled; went to Balliol College, Oxford. | 1792 | Satire on Corporal Punishment in The Flagellant. |
| | Left the University. | 1794 | Poems—with Lovell. |
| | | 1793 | Wrote Joan of Arc and Wat Tyler. |
| | Met Coleridge; the Pantisocratic scheme was formed and failed; lectured in Bath and Bristol. | 1794 | |

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE. | WRITINGS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| ROBERT SOUTHEY —*continued* | Married Miss Fricker, sister of Mrs. Coleridge and Mrs. Lovell; went to Lisbon. | 1795 | Poems. |
| | | 1796 | Joan of Arc. |
| | Received an annuity from Wynn. | 1797 | Letters written in Spain and Portugal. Minor Poems. |
| | | 1799—1800 | The Annual Anthology—a miscellany. |
| | Studied law at Gray's Inn. | 1801 | Thalaba, the Destroyer, a Metrical Romance. |
| | Went to Greta Hall, Keswick. | 1803 | Amadis de Gaul—prose translation from the Spanish of Ordoñez de Montalvo. Works of Chatterton. |
| | Met Sir Walter Scott. | 1805 | Metrical Tales and other Poems. Madoc —a Poem in two parts. |
| | Received a pension of £160 a year. | 1807 | Specimens of the Later English Poets with Preliminary Notices. Palmerin of England from the Portuguese. Letters from England, by Don Manuel Velasquez Espriella. |
| | | 1807—22 | Remains of Henry Kirke White with an account of his life. |
| | | 1808 | The Chronicle of the Cid, Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar—from the Spanish. |
| | | 1810 | The Curse of Kehama—a poem. |
| | | 1810—19 | The History of Brazil. |
| | | 1812 | Omniana. |
| | Succeeded Pye as Poet Laureate. | 1813 | Life of Nelson. |

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|---|---|---|
| | 1814 | Carmen Triumphale for the commencement of the year 1814 and Carmen Aulica. Odes to the Prince Regent, the Emperor of Russia, and the King of Prussia. Roderick, the last of the Goths—poem. |
| | 1815 | Minor Poems. |
| | 1816 | The Lay of the Laureate. Carmen Nuptiale. A Poet's Pilgrimage to Waterloo. Specimens of the Later British Poets. |
| | 1817 | Wat Tyler. A Letter to Sir Wm. South, Esq., M.P. Morte d' Arthur of Malory with notes and introduction. |
| | 1820 | Life of John Wesley. |
| LL.D., Oxford. | 1821 | A Vision of Judgement—a poem. The Expedition of Orsua and the Crimes of Aguirre. |
| | 1822—7—32 | History of the Peninsular War. |
| | 1824 | The Book of the Church. |
| | 1825 | A Tale of Paraguay—a poem. |
| | 1826 | Vindiciae Ecclesiae Anglicanae. |
| | 1829 | Sir Thomas More, or Colloquies. All for Love or The Sinner well saved. The Pilgrim to Compostella, or A Legend of a Cock and a Hen. |
| | 1830 | Life of John Bunyan. |
| | 1831 | Attempts in Verse by John Jones with an introductory essay on the lives and works of our uneducated poets. Selections. Select works of the British Poets from Chaucer to Jonson, edited with Biographical Notes. |

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE. | WRITINGS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| ROBERT SOUTHEY —*continued* | | 1832 | Essays Moral and Political. Prose Selections. |
| | | 1833—40 | Naval History of England. |
| | | 1834—7 | The Doctor in five volumes. |
| | | 1834 | Dr. Watts's Poems with a Life. |
| | Pension increased to £300 a year. | 1835 | |
| | | 1835—8 | The Works of William Cowper with a Life. |
| | His wife died. | 1837 | Poetical Works of Robert Southey collected by himself; ten vols. |
| | Married Catherine Bowles. | 1839 | |
| | Died. | 1843 | |
| | | 1810—24 | Contributions to The Edinburgh Annual Register. 52 papers in The Critical Review; 3 in The Foreign Quarterly. |
| | | From 1809 | About 126 papers on history, biography, politics, morals and general literature in The Quarterly Review. |
| | | 1844 | Life of Cromwell. |
| | | 1845 | Oliver Newman and other fragments. |
| | | 1847 | Robin Hood—a fragment. Life of Dr. Andrew Bell. |
| | | 1856 | Selections from the letters of Robert Southey. Edited by Warter. |
| | | 1849—50 | Commonplace Books—edited by Warter. |
| WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR 1775—1864 | Born in Warwickshire. | 1775 | |
| | Educated at Rugby and Oxford. | | |
| | | 1795 | Poems. Moral Epistle. |
| | | 1798 | Gebir—a Poem written, and published at |

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|---|---|---|
| | | Warwick. |
| Visited Paris. | 1802 | |
| | 1803 | Gebir—a Latin version. |
| Sold his estates and went abroad. | 1806 | |
| | 1812 | Count Julian—a tragedy. |
| Settled near Florence. | 1815 | |
| | 1820 | Idylla Heroica—Latin poems |
| | 1824—9 | Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen. |
| | 1831 | Gebir, Count Julian and other Poems. |
| | 1834 | The Citation and Examination of William Shakespeare. |
| Returned to England. | 1835 | |
| | 1836 | Letters of a Conservative. Pericles and Aspasia. A Satire on Satirists and Admonition to Detractors. |
| | 1837 | The Pentameron and Pentalogue. |
| | 1839 | Andrea of Hungary—a drama. Giovanni of Naples – a drama. |
| | 1847 | Hellenics. Imaginary Conversation on the Affairs of Italy. Poemata et Inscriptiones. |
| | 1851 | Popery, British and Foreign. |
| | 1853 | The Last Fruit of an Old Tree. |
| | 1854 | Letters of an American. |
| | 1856 | Antony and Octavius. |
| Returned to Italy. | 1858 | Dry Sticks faggoted by W. S. Landor. |
| | 1863 | Heroic Idylls |
| Died. | 1864 | |

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE. | WRITINGS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| HENRY KIRKE WHITE 1785—1806 | Born at Nottingham. | 1785 | |
| | Son of a butcher. First apprenticed to a hosier; then articled to an attorney. Set his heart on entering the Church; and did all in his power to educate himself. | | On being confined to School one pleasant morning in Spring. |
| | | 1802 | Address to Contemplation. |
| | | 1803 | Poems. Chief—Clifton Grove; Gondoline; Time; The Christiad; Sonnets. |
| | Quitted the law. | 1804 | |
| | Entered at Cambridge; his constant application to study injured his health beyond repair. | | |
| | Died. | 1806 | |
| JAMES HOGG 1772—1835 | Son of a shepherd at Ettrick Hall. | | |
| | Went to Edinburgh (1810) and thenceforth known as The Ettrick Shepherd of Literature. | 1794 | The Mistakes of a Night. |
| | | 1801 | Verses. |
| | | 1807 | The Mountain Bard. |
| | | 1813 | The Queen's Wake; Madoc of the Moor; The Pilgrims of the Sun; The Poetic Mirror; Queen Hynde—poems. The Brownie of Bodsbeck; Winter Evening Tales; The Three Perils of Man; The Three Perils of Women; The Atrive Tales; Lay Sermons; Life of Scott; The Confessions of a Justified Sinner—prose pieces. |

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|---|---|---|---|
| JOSEPH COTTLE 1770—1853 | Bookseller and publisher in Bristol. Maintained close relations with Southey and Coleridge. | | Alfred—a poem. The Fall of Cambria. The Malvern Hills. |
| | | 1847 | Recollections of Coleridge. |
| AMOS COTTLE Died 1800 | Brother of Joseph Cottle. | 1797 | Translation of The Edda. |
| CHARLES LLOYD Died 1839 | Son of a banker at Birmingham. | 1796 | Poems. |
| | | 1798 | Poems in Blank Verse, with Lamb. Edmund Oliver—a Novel. |
| | | 1799 | Lines. Duke d'Ormond—a tragedy. |
| | | 1819 | Nugae Canorum—poems. |
| | | 1815 | Translations of the Tragedies of Alfieri. |
| | | 1821 | Titus and Gisippus. Poetical Essays on Pope. |
| ROBERT LLOYD 1733—1764 | Son of a clergyman. Friend of Churchill. | 1751 | The Progress of Envy. |
| | | 1760 | The Actor—a poem. Tears and Triumphs of Parnassus. |
| | | 1761 | Arcadia, or The Shepherd's Wedding. |
| | | 1764 | The Capricious Lovers—comic opera. The Puff, a dialogue in verse. Two Odes to Obscurity and Oblivion, with the elder Colman. |
| HENRY JAMES PYE 1745—1813 | Born at London. Educated at Oxford. Entered Parliament. | 1745 | |
| | | 1784 | |
| | | 1763 | Elegies. |
| | | 1775 | Six Olympic Odes of Pindar. |
| | | 1778 | The Art of War. |
| | | 1783 | The Progress of Refinement. |

| Name. | Biographical Details. | Date. | Writings. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Henry James Pye —*continued* | Succeeded Warton as Poet Laureate. | 1787 | Poems on Various Subjects. |
| | | 1790 | |
| | | 1792 | A Commentary illustrating the Poetics of Aristotle. |
| | | 1796 | Leonore--a Tale ; from the German. |
| | | 1801 | Alfred—an epic poem in six books. |
| | | 1807 | Comments on the Commentators of Shakespeare. |
| | Died. | 1813 | |
| Gilbert West 1705—1756 | Son of Dr. West, a clergyman. Commission in the army ; then clerk of the Privy Council. Lived at Wickham. | 1752 | |
| | | 1739 | Canto of The Faërie Queene. |
| | | 1742 | The Institutions of the Garter. |
| | | 1747 | Observations on the History and Evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. |
| | | 1749 | Odes of Pindar translated. |
| | | 1751 | Education—a Poem in two cantos. |
| Edward Moore 1712—1757 | Born at Abingdon, Berks. First a linen draper ; then an author. | 1712 | |
| | | 1744 | Fables for the Female Sex. |
| | | 1748 | Trial of Selim the Persian. The Foundling—a comedy. |
| | | 1751 | Gil Blas—a comedy. |
| | | 1753 | The Gamester—a tragedy. |
| | | 1756 | Poems, Fables and Plays. |

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|---|---|---|---|
| JOHN HOME 1724—1808 | Born at Ancrum, Roxburgh. | 1724 | |
| | Licensed as a minister. | 1747 | |
| | | 1756 | Douglas—a tragedy. |
| | | 1758 | Agis—a tragedy. |
| | | | The Siege of Aquileia—a tragedy. |
| | | 1769 | The Fatal Discovery—a tragedy. |
| | | 1773 | Alonzo—a tragedy. |
| | | 1778 | Alfred—a tragedy. |
| | | 1802 | History of the Rebellion of 1745. |
| ELIZABETH CARTER 1717—1806 | Eldest daughter of Rev. Nicholas Carter, D.D., curate of Deal. | | |
| | Intimately acquainted with Dr. Johnson. | 1738 | Poems on Several Occasions. |
| | | 1741—70 | Letters between Mrs. E. Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot. |
| | | 1746 | Ode to Wisdom. |
| | | 1755—1800 | Letters to Mrs. Montague. |
| | | 1758 | Translations of Epictelus, Crousaz's Examen of Pope's Essay on Man, Algarotti's Explanation of Newton's Philosophy. |
| | | | Two Papers in The Rambler. |
| | | 1762 | Poems. |
| | | 1807 | Memoirs. |
| SUSANNA BLAMIRE 1747—1794 | A native of Cumberland; lived in Scotland for some time. | 1842 | Collected Works including Stocklewath, or The Cumbrian Village, and the lyrics, The Nabob, The Siller Crown, The Waefu' Heart and Auld Robin Forbes. |
| O. JONES | An uneducated journeyman wool comber. Known as "The Devonshire Poet." | 1786 | Poetic Attempts. |

| NAME. | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. | DATE. | WRITINGS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| STEPHEN DUCK died 1756 | A thresher; then a clergyman of the Established Church. | 1730 | Poems. |
| | | 1738 | Truth and Falsehood—a fable. |
| | | 1736 | The Thresher's Labour—a poem. The Shunamite—a religious poem. |
| | | 1740 | Alaric and Isabel—a poem. |
| | | 1755 | Cæsar Camp. |
| | Committed suicide. | 1756 | |
| | | 1794 | Poems, with a Memoir by Spence. |

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